A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE: EMMA WOLF, A JEWISH-AMERICAN WRITER ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

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A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE: EMMA WOLF, A JEWISH-AMERICAN WRITER ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

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Abstract

"A World of Difference: Emma Wolf, A Jewish-American Writer on the American Frontier" is the first dissertation to undertake a scholarly inquiry of Wolf's Jewish novels, Other Things Being Equal and Heirs of Yesterday. Emma Wolf (1865-1932) was a Jewish-American literary pioneer who interrogated prevailing models of late nineteenth-century femininity, Judaism, and bifurcated, Jewish-American identity. This study retrieves the fiction of this native Californian from the margins of both Jewish and American literature. At the close of the nineteenth century, nearly all interest in American-Jewish life focused on the Eastern European Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side of New York City. Emma Wolf's fiction imparts a singular glimpse of a Western American enclave of Jewish life. Remarkably, Wolf's Jewish novels resist the prevailing patterns of assimilation espoused by most Jewish writers at the end of the century. Instead of abandoning culture, faith, and family, Wolf embraces Jewish particularity. The preservation of Jewish identity in Wolf's fiction is a consequence of her American birth, her California origins, and her conviction that Jewish difference is as important as American conformity.

Other Things Being Equal (1892) scrutinizes the struggle of a young Jewish woman who wants to marry a Christian. In sanctioning intermarriage, the novel abrogates religious precepts and contravenes the customary marital patterns of Jewish women. The implications of intermarriage afford Wolf the opportunity to expand on issues of Jewish affirmation and Jewish difference.

In Heirs of Yesterday (1900) Wolf examines divergent responses of Jewish-Americans to anti-Semitism. In order to protect himself from discrimination, Dr. Philip May hides his Jewish birth. Wolf suggests that Jews who are forgetful of their ethnic identity are as misguided as the segment of American society that discriminates against them.

This study of Emma Wolf's Jewish novels concludes that we must take a new literary census, one that embraces minority writers, like Emma Wolf, in order to appreciate the pluralism of the American literary canon and the full panoply of the nation's cultural productivity.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCAR	Central Conference of American Rabbis
HY	Heirs of Yesterday
JSP	Jewish Publication Society of America
NCJW	National Council of Jewish Women
NJPS	National Jewish Population Survey
OTBE	Others Things Being Equal
UAHC	Union of American Hebrew Congregations
WEIU	Women's Educational Industrial Union

Chapter 1: Making a Difference

This dissertation assesses the Jewish fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Jewish-American writer, Emma Wolf (1865-1932). As an American-born Jew and a native Californian, Wolf contributed to multiple literary traditions by working at the intersections of American literature, Jewish-American literature, regional literature, and women's literature. Emma Wolf's literary productivity incorporates five novels, a novella, ten short stories, two known poems, and a book review. Ten letters from the noted Anglo-Jewish author of The Melting Pot, Israel Zangwill, to Emma Wolf remain in the possession of the Wolf family.[1] Wolf's short stories appeared frequently in The Smart Set, a leading literary magazine and a precursor to the New Yorker, edited by George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken. In 1909, Wolf's novella, "The Knot," was the cover story for the Smart Set's August issue.[2] This dissertation is invested in the exploration of Wolf's two explicitly Jewish-themed novels, her first book, Other Things Being Equal (1892) and her fourth book, Heirs of Yesterday (1900).

Until the Postmodernist era, with few exceptions, Jewish women writers have largely been marginalized and placed beyond the canon of received works of American literature. There are only a handful of studies that bring recognition to American-born Jewish women writers whose productivity predated the literature produced by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. This dissertation attempts to recover a deserving author

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[1] I am indebted to the scholarship of Barbara Cantalupo, who located Zangwill's correspondence to Wolf and published several informative articles on Emma Wolf that are referenced throughout this dissertation.

[2] Nine of Wolf's short stories were published in The Smart Set between 1902 and 1911; a tenth story, "One-Eye, Two-Eye Three Eye," appeared in the American Jewess 2.6 (March 1896):279-290. A children's story submitted to the Jewish Publication Society has not been located.

from the margins of both Jewish and American literature. At the same time, it is my intention to expand the understanding of the diversity of women's writing at the close of the nineteenth century by retrieving Emma Wolf's Jewish novels from near obscurity.

In Emma Wolf's experience the often conflicting allegiances common to other ethnic writing is trebled as Wolf negotiates the parameters that define her writing as an American-born Jew, a Westerner, and an unmarried woman. How did Wolf preserve and acknowledge these distinctions? Like other women in the nineteenth century, Wolf used her writing to forge her identity, test her ideology, and temper her judgments. The inclusion of non-canonical, ethnic literature has gained credence in recent decades and Emma Wolf's position as a minority-within-a-minority gives her work renewed importance as appreciation of American history and literatures becomes increasingly pluralistic, crossing racial, ideological, regional and cultural boundaries. It is precisely these interconnections with nineteenth century cultural, national, geographic, social, and religious circumstances that make the recovery of Emma Wolf's fiction important and relevant.

Emma Wolf's parents were Jewish pioneers on the American frontier, and Emma Wolf, the fourth of their eleven children, was born in San Francisco on June 15, 1865. Emma's parents, Simon and Annette (neé Levy) Wolf arrived in California along with other Alsatian Jews in the middle to late 1850s. Settling in Contra Costa Country along with many other Alsatian-Jewish immigrants, Simon Wolf quickly established a string of general merchandise stores. Wolf's father is mentioned as "One of the most important Jewish pioneers of the county" in William Tornheim's history of the "Pioneer Jews of

Contra Costa County."[3] From Tornheim's account, a fairly detailed picture of the Wolf family patriarch emerges. Many of Simon Wolf's experiences as a merchant and member of a fraternal order are recycled in Wolf's fiction. Simon Wolf was born in France in 1822 and probably arrived in California when he was in his mid-thirties; he died in 1878 at the age of fifty-six when Emma was thirteen. Tornheim relates that Simon Wolf was a successful businessman who set up stores that were run by his Jewish partners along the Sacramento River Delta in Somersville, Alamo, Danville, Antioch, Brentwood and Point of Timer.[4] Tornheim discloses that a branch store of the Alamo business, Wolf & Co. which was operated by his partner Michael Cohen, remained in operation for sixty years (1858-1918). Wolf belonged to the Mount Diablo Lodge number 128 of the Odd Fellows. Apparently, Simon Wolf was a litigious individual because in the account of California's pioneering Jews, Tornheim recounts that

> From the Justice and District record of Contra Costa County it is evident that Simon Wolf spent a great deal of time in court. He was a plaintiff as early as 1859. On August 10, 1876, the sheriff attached and turned over to Wolf the following property to satisfy a judgment for $717.16: 319 sacks of barley, 137 sacks of wheat, 50 tons of hay, 1 spring wagon and 1 set of double harness. (7)

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[3] All of the details reported about Simon Wolf's business ventures, affiliations, court proceedings, and death are recounted in William Tornheim's "The Pioneer Jews of Contra Costa County." Western Jewish History 16.1 (Oct. 1983): 3-12.

[4] Danville, Antioch, Brentwood and Alamo are still in existence; Somersville was six miles north of Byron in 1869 and five miles east of Brentwood and existed from 1863-1910. Point of Timber was two miles north of Byron in 1869 and five miles east of Brentwood. These towns are located between 40 and 45 miles east and north of San Francisco.

By the mid-1860s, around the time of Emma's birth, Simon Wolf moved his family from Contra Costa County to San Francisco, where he operated a cigar and tobacco shop in the Russ Hotel, located between Pine and Bush on Montgomery. In the 1870s, Wolf resituated his office of operations for his Contra Costa County stores to 222 California Street at the San Francisco waterfront. Tornheim imparts that it was Simon Wolf's habit to attend to his Contra Costa County businesses on the East Bay by sailing on Mondays from San Francisco to Benicia, and then take another ferry to Martinez, where he would continue by horse and buggy to see his partners at his other stores. At the end of the week, Simon returned to San Francisco. According to various city directories that I consulted, the Wolf family moved frequently in the 1860s and 1870s, living on Taylor, Mission and Vallejo Streets, but Emma Wolf spent nearly her entire adult life living in the fashionable Pacific Heights section of San Francisco.[5] When Simon Wolf died on Thursday, September 12, 1878, on his return to San Francisco, Emma was thirteen years old. Simon Wolf was survived by his only surviving son, Julius (1866-1923), and eight daughters. A ninth daughter was born after his death. Emma's brother Julius became president of the Grain Exchange and his prominence in the San Francisco

[5] Langley's 1869 Directory indicates several addresses for Simon Wolf's residences and businesses. Two dwellings for Simon Wolf at 932 Mission Street (currently in the South of Market district between Fifth and Sixth Streets) and another at 332 Minna Street (located off of Market near the waterfront) were Wolf family residences in the 1860s. Emma's father was the proprietor or partner of the following businesses listed in Langley's Directory: Cigars and tobacco, Russ House [a hotel with a bar and restaurant that opened in 1869]; Cigar maker with Cobo, Masterglo, 833 Vallejo Street; and Simon Wolf & Co. with James Alexander, boots and shoes at 38 Third Street. Edward Langley, 1869 San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing December 1869 (San Francisco: Langley, 1869) 648.

community is attested to by the unprecedented one-day closure of the Board of Trade when Julius Wolf died.[6]

In her lifetime, Emma Wolf (1865-1932) acquired public attention for her novels on Jewish and secular subjects, but few details about her private life survive. As a member of a household filled with daughters, Wolf used her novels to document the lives of women whose experience spanned the divide of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and undoubtedly some of the events captured in the fiction are derived from incidents in her sisters' lives. Wolf's sister Alice was also a published author whose interfaith marriage may have provided some kindling for the plot of Other Things Being Equal.[7]

Reminiscences passed down by Wolf's surviving relatives and reflections recorded by her contemporaries provide a glimpse of the woman behind the fiction. Emma's niece, Barbara Aaron, who lives in San Francisco, has told me in our correspondence that the Wolf family retains some family photographs as well as the Zangwill correspondence. Wolf's childhood friend, Rebekah Bettelheim Kohut, who became the president of the New York branch of the National Council of Jewish Women and a committed social activist, tenders in her autobiography, My Portion (An Autobiography) (1925), a first-hand glimpse of her girlhood companion. The daughter of Rabbi Albert (Aaron) Siegfried Bettelheim, Rebekah Kohut recalls Emma Wolf as "a fine influence" and "a brilliant authoress noted particularly for her story, *Other Things Being*

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[6] Cantalupo reports in the biographical sketch, "Emma Wolf" that one child died at three weeks and son at the age of four. Cantalupo's information about Julius Wolf was derived from an interview with William Tornheim quoted in "Emma Wolf (1865-1932),"Jewish American Women Writers, Ed. Shapiro. (Westport, Greenwood, 1994) 465.

[7] Alice Wolf, A House of Cards (Chicago: Stone & Kimball 1896).

Equal" (60). In her memoir, Kohut relates that Emma Wolf "was handicapped from birth by a useless arm, but there was no defect in her mentality. Her memory was the most remarkable I have ever encountered. She could quote with equal facility the texts of long poems or the fatality statistics of each of the world's great battles" (61). As school girls, Kohut fondly remembers how "She [Emma Wolf] and I used to roam the sand hills together on botany excursions" (60). Kohut nostalgically recalls her adventures on the Marin County hills with her classmate:

> Botany was our curriculum. . . . How could one live in California and not become a botanist? Saturday afternoons and Sundays we went over the sand-hills of Saucelito [sic] and San Rafael, yellow poppies around us, carpets of maiden hair-ferns, under our feet. The sand-hills of California!
>
> . . . On our walks we hunted for new specimens of flowers, which we took home and mounted. We vied with one another in trying to get together the largest and best collections. . . . Those walks, indeed, did a great deal to stimulate our sense of beauty. (61)

One of Wolf's two surviving poems, "Eschscholtzia," parenthetically subtitled (California Poppy), surely had its origins in these walks with Rebekah Bettelheim. "Eschscholtzia" is also mentioned in Heirs of Yesterday (142-43). [8] In her article on Zangwill's correspondence with Emma Wolf, Barbara Cantalupo mentions that Israel

[8] "Eschscholtzia" appeared in the American Jewess 2.4 (Jan. 1896):195. The popularity of California's state flower as a subject for poetry is apparent because a nearly identically titled poem, "Escholtzias [sic] (California Poppies)" by Alice Gray Cowan appeared in San Francisco's Overland Monthly 19.113 (May 1892):529.

Zangwill not only lifted the last line of Wolf's poem for the title of his novel, The Mantel of Elijah (1901) but also dedicated this novel to Wolf, "albeit discretely," as the inscription reads "'To M.W. and E.W.'"(Cantalupo, "Letters" 126). I have also located a second poem "Vanity?" that was published in the American Jewess in 1895.[9] In his correspondence with Wolf, Israel Zangwill refers to some of Wolf's missing poems. Writing to Wolf on May 14, 1898, Zangwill mentions "I like your poems, one and all, though in all [the poems] there are unequal lines. In "Prayer" the last verse is best, the "Beethoven" 's sestet is stronger than the octave though all is good" (Cantalupo, "Letters" 133). At the time, Wolf was writing Heirs of Yesterday and coincidentally the novel's heroine is skilled pianist with a particular admiration for Beethoven. In the same letter, Zangwill cites another poem, "Pisgah," and deduces that the title is indebted to Browning's "Pisgah-Reefs." Although Emma Wolf is identified as a poet in her obituary and elsewhere, beyond the references in Zangwill's correspondence and Wolf's two published poems no other record of her poetry has survived or been found. Among Wolf's other vanished works are a children's story and a novel that Wolf submitted to the Jewish Publication Society. The missing poetry, children's story, and a third Jewish novel suggest that Emma Wolf was a more diversified, and certainly more prolific, author than the extant works suggest.[10]

A comely photograph of Emma Wolf appeared in the American Jewess in September 1895 with a complimentary review of Other Things Being Equal by the editor

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[9] Emma Wolf, "Vanity?" American Jewess 1.4 (July 1895):183.

[10] See Chapter 3: Heirs of Yesterday: Jewish Pride and American Prejudice, page 83, n.7 for a detailed discussion of Wolf's submissions to the Jewish Publication Society.

and founder of the journal, Rosa Sonneschein, who reports that Emma Wolf began to write in her thirteenth year.[11] In Sonneschein's laudatory appraisal of Other Things Being Equal, she mentions that the thirty-year old Emma Wolf "not being very robust enters little into society except that of a small beloved circle" (295). Apparently, Wolf's childhood polio had recurred, and it afflicted her adulthood. Even though Emma completed high school and teacher's college, her infirmity prevented her from teaching. During the last fifteen years of her life Emma Wolf, who was infirm and confined to a wheelchair, lived with her mother at 2100 Pacific Avenue in the home of her older sister, Linnie (Celeste) Kauffman (Cantalupo,"Emma Wolf" 466).[12]

Many of the French and German Jewish pioneers who arrived during the California Gold Rush belonged to the Reform synagogue on Sutter Street, Congregation Emanu-El, one of California's most architecturally distinctive buildings. Barbara Aaron, Wolf's niece, and Paula Freedman, the archivist of Temple Emanu-El, confirm the Wolf family's membership in the congregation.[13] Emma Wolf also joined the Philomath Club, a Jewish women's literary group.

Though unmarried and home-bound by illness, Emma Wolf does not conform to the iconic perceptions of the reclusive writer. Wolf's observations of the social and

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[11] Wolf's obituary indicates that Wolf's first story was printed at the age of 12. See "Emma Wolf, Beloved S.F. Author, Dead," San Francisco Chronicle (31 Aug. 1932):9.

[12] I visited the sites of Emma Wolf's former residences in 2007. Prior to Wolf's move to 2100 Pacific Avenue, Emma Wolf lived on Washington Street. Wolf's last known residential address at 2100 Pacific Avenue is no longer a single family residence but has been replaced by an apartment building that stands on the site of her former home. The Pacific Heights' neighborhood retains many of the elegant nineteenth century's single family mansions that survived the 1906 earthquake and fire; however, these older residences are interspersed among newer condominiums and apartment buildings.

[13] Paula Freeman, personal interview, 5 Dec. 2006.

interpersonal dynamics of her day were acutely, sometimes acerbically, transcribed. Over the course of a productive literary career inaugurated in1892 with Other Things Being Equal and ending in 1916 with the publication of Fulfillment: A California Novel, Wolf tracks the lives of women who vacillated between nineteenth-century conventions and twentieth-century reforms. In 2002, Wayne State University Press reprinted Emma Wolf's Other Things Being Equal, informatively introduced and edited by Barbara Cantalupo.[14]

Wolf's first novel, Other Things Being Equal, and Heirs of Yesterday (1900), her fourth book, are immersed in the problems, paradoxes and pleasures of Jewish life at the close of the nineteenth century. In these two works, Wolf addresses the complications that accompany disenfranchised women and career-driven men who negotiate hybridized identities as Americans and Jews. The Progressive Age was a destabilizing period for women in America as the ideals of traditional womanhood were refashioned to the contours of the Progressive era's New Woman. Wolf's Jewish novels chart not only the social shifts that characterized American culture of the period but the rituals, laws, and traditions that prescribed specific roles for Jewish women who lived in both secular and religious communities.

Other Things Being Equal (1892) scrutinizes the struggle of a young Jewish woman, tellingly named Ruth, who wants to marry a non-Jew, Dr. Herbert Kemp, without abnegating her commitment to her Jewish faith or disappointing her beloved

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[14] Emma Wolf, Other Things Being Equal, 1892. Ed. Barbara Cantalupo (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002). Cantalupo reports that McClurg's published Other Things Being Equal in 1892 but it "was reissued six times—1893, 1894,1895, 1898, 1901--and a revised version published in 1916-- . . ." (31). The Wayne State edition is based on the version of the novel that Wolf revised in 1916.

father. Ruth is torn between her affection for the physician and the obligation she feels to her father who objects to an interfaith marriage. Though Wolf was comfortable with the Americanized adaptations of Reform Judaism, Other Things Being Equal abrogates Jewish halachic tradition and countermands cultural norms by placing a Jewish woman in the position of the spouse who abrogates the faith. The social and religious implications of intermarriage provide Wolf with the opportunity to expand upon a number of issues pertinent to Jewish affirmation and Jewish difference. Other Things Being Equal enjoyed immediate success, was widely reviewed, and secured Emma Wolf's regional reputation.[15]

Even amid the relative tolerance that prevailed in San Francisco, late nineteenth-century American life was marred by rising Anti-Semitism, and Wolf's novel Heirs of Yesterday (1900) examines this particularly virulent period of Jewish discrimination and secondary citizenship. Wolf's heroine, Jean Willard, urges Jews not to exchange their ethnic, religious, and cultural inheritance for an exclusively American identity. In Heirs of Yesterday, set once again in the familiar milieu of Wolf's Pacific Heights' neighborhood and the adjoining military installation, the Presidio, the novel takes place during the nationalist fervor of the Spanish-American War. Wolf contrasts Jean Willard, a Jewish American woman, who affirms that as a Jew she carries in her very being the history of all Jews, with Harvard-trained Dr. Philip May, the son of German-Jewish immigrants who rejects his Jewish identity, discarding every vestige of his Jewish birthright from his persona as he reinvents himself as an American. Dr. May disavows

[15] See Chapter 2: Other Things Being Equal: The Religion of Love, page 15, nn. 2-3 for a list of the contemporary reviews of Wolf's first novel.

his Jewish inheritance and distances himself from family connections to promote his professional and social advancement. As in her previous Jewish novel, Heirs of Yesterday also contravenes Jewish expectations by countermanding the assimilative impulses of the era of massive Jewish immigration. Heirs of Yesterday advances the opinion that Jews who remain either forgetful of their tribal identity or willfully neglectful of Judaism are as misguided as the society that discriminates against them.

Intervening between her Jewish novels, Wolf published in 1894 A Prodigal in Love which embraces a proto-feminist posture. In this romantic novel, Wolf explores the tropes of female propriety, premarital sexuality, and prescriptive patterns of feminine morality that place honor and self-sacrifice above a woman's personal happiness. Although Wolf's progressive feminism is on display in her Jewish novels, her gendered advocacy is occasionally muted by the romance and traditional values embedded in her short stories and secular novels. In modulating her feminism with conventional behaviors, Wolf embraces the reforms of the Progressive era while acknowledging an allegiance to the past. Her wavering stance--alternately liberal and conventional, progressive and traditional, universal and tribal--enacts the reality of her time where women defined themselves by espousing frequently dichotomous convictions. In Other Things Being Equal, Wolf endorses a liberal view of intermarriage and is a soft-spoken advocate of the New Woman. In Heirs of Yesterday, as the title infers, Wolf veers away from universalism and reaffirms her tribalism. Emma Wolf balanced the contingencies that counter-balanced her life, forging multiple identities as a nineteenth-century Jewish

writer on America's closing frontier and as a woman writing during a period of male hegemony.

Emma Wolf died on August 29, 1932, in the Dante Sanatorium in the same City by the Bay where she lived her entire life. She was eulogized in the same synagogue, Emanu-El, where many years before Wolf had, in turn, eulogized the temple's cantor. She is buried nearby in Colma, California, in the Home of Peace Cemetery in the Wolf family plot.[16]

It is impossible to characterize Wolf's fiction as representing a sustained world view because Wolf's thoughtful independence from both conventional norms as well as progressive expectations demarcates her collective works. Wolf directed her creative energy into exposing the dilemmas of Jewish identity, exploring the assimilative inclination of Reform Jews, and investigating the status of women. Throughout her corpus Emma Wolf portrayed the lives of women as nineteenth-century ideals collided with the twentieth century's modernist ideology. Wolf's Jewish novels do not promulgate assimilative remedies for conflicting national, religious, and cultural identities, and her secular fiction does not promote predictable resolutions for the conflicts that beset the

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[16] Judy Edmonson, e-mail to Dena Mandel, 22 Oct. 2007. Judith Edmonson, a representative of the Home of Peace Cemetery, confirms that "The family plot is under the ownership of Julius L. Wolf, in which Emma Wolf (deceased August 29, 1932), is buried along with her parents Annette and Simon Wolf, and many other family members." Fred Rosenbaum reports that "In 1860, [Temple] Emanu-El joined with the Eureka Benevolent Society to purchase a burial place on Eighteenth and Dolores in the Mission District, then an undeveloped part of the city. Known as the Home of Peace Cemetery, it adjoined a block bought at the same time by [Temple] Sherith Israel and served the community for almost thirty years" in Visions of Reform: Congregation Emanu-El and the Jews of San Francisco, (Berkeley: Judah Magnes Museum, 2000) 31. Edward Zerin explains in Jewish San Francisco (Charleston: Arcadia, 2006) that "With the growth of the [San Francisco's] Mission District...further burial in the Dolores Cemetery was prohibited after 1888. New grounds then were purchased in Colma. Emanu-El still calls the section "Home of Peace" and Sherith Israel's section is known as "Hills of Eternity" (25).

New Woman. Instead, Wolf's characters learn to live in a world of differences rather than yield to normative paradigms of the day that tended toward the Americanization of religious and cultural distinctions and the advancement of feminist advocacy. As Jews, Wolf's protagonists are different, and as much as some of the characters might consider themselves no different from their fellow Americans, in the late nineteenth century, Jews lived in a world apart—sometimes by choice and sometimes ghettoized by discrimination. Confronting the anxiety of displacement, Wolf penned her novels as a means of mediating rather than easing or erasing difference, a social and literary legacy that has been reactivated in subsequent generations of Jewish-American women writers, who, like Wolf, confront the history of their distinctive identity.

Chapter 2: Other Things Being Equal: The Religion of Love

2.1 Literary Recovery and Rediscovery

For nearly a century, there was little interest in Emma Wolf's first novel, Other Things Being Equal. Underappreciated and undervalued, Other Things Being Equal merits new inquiry precisely because of Wolf's engagement with the imperatives of identity formation and feminine transformation, topics of increasing relevance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Because Wolf's novels were previously read as conventional romances, they were erased from collegiate syllabi, ignored by progressive feminists, and overlooked by publishers and scholars of Jewish-American literature who were preoccupied with the literary outpouring of Eastern European Jewish immigrants and the work of their American-born children.

In the 1890s, there were only a few Jewish women novelists born in the United States who documented Jewish life in America. Thematically and chronologically, Wolf's closest literary companion is Annie Nathan Meyer (1867-1951), a cousin of Emma Lazarus and a founder of Barnard College. Meyer's novel, Helen Brent MD: A Social Study, recounts the difficulty of sustaining both a career and marriage. Helen Brent MD and Other Things Being Equal appeared in 1892, and both authors respectively move toward atypical conclusions. In Helen Brent MD, "the main character resolves the irreconcilable conflict between marriage and career by deliberately forsaking wedlock for professional fulfillment" (Lichtenstein, Writing 77). Wolf is similarly audacious for sanctioning marriage between a Jew and a Christian in Other Things Being Equal. Although critics have acknowledged Wolf's unusual stance, few credit her iconoclasm in

selecting a Jewish woman rather than a Jewish man to abrogate Jewish matrimonial law. Moreover, as a late-nineteenth-century woman writer in a profession dominated by men, Other Things Being Equal merits recognition for its unrivaled effort in rendering one of the most comprehensive interrogations of exogamous marriage in Jewish-American fiction. Following the publication of Other things Being Equal, Emma Wolf was known as a retiring local celebrity and as an author who had earned a respected national reputation.

Other Things Being Equal was reprinted five times—1893, 1894, 1895, 1898, 1901, and a revised edition appeared in 1916 with a new foreword by the author.[1] The novel received laudatory reviews from literary critics, most prominently, Israel Zangwill, who avowed in London's Jewish Chronicle that "in Emma Wolf, of San Francisco, a novelist has arisen whose career must henceforth be followed with loving interest by all of us who care for letters."[2] Nationally, Other Things Being Equal was reviewed in Boston's Literary World and Philadelphia's Public Ledger.[3] Even in the years following

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[1] Barbara Cantalupo, ed., Introduction, Other Things Being Equal [1892] by Emma Wolf (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002) 30. This edition incorporates the revisions Wolf made to Other Things Being Equal in 1916. All subsequent references to Other Things Being Equal refer to this edition and will be abbreviated in-text as OTBE.

[2] Israel Zangwill, "A New Jewish Novelist," The Jewish Chronicle [London] New Series 1.453 (5 Feb. 5 1897):19. In the twenty-first century, Israel Zangwill's name does not enjoy the instant recognition that it did in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Meri-Jane Rochelson states in the Introduction to Children of the Ghetto that Zangwill's novel [Children of the Ghetto, 1892] "created a sensation on two continents and established its author as the preeminent literary voice of Anglo-Jewry." Children of the Ghetto: A Study of a Peculiar People (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998)11.

[3] Some of the contemporary reviews of Other Things Being Equal include Ella Sterling Cummins, ed., The Story of the Files: A Review of California Writers and Literature (San Francisco: World's Fair Commission 1893):356; "Fiction," Literary World [Boston] (14 Jan. 1893):3; "New Publications," Rev. of Other Things Being Equal, by Emma Wolf, Public Ledger [Philadelphia] (20 Dec.1892):4; "Recent Fiction," The Critic: A Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts [1886-1899] (18 March 1893):161; Louise Stockton, "Among the New Books," New Peterson Magazine (Feb.1893):215.

the first edition in 1892, Other Things Being Equal continued to attract critical attention because of its daring endorsement of interfaith marriage. In 1901, a full-page photograph of the author, then thirty-six years old, appeared with a three-page collective assessment of her fiction in the September-October issue of San Francisco's Mechanics' Institute Library Journal, where the anonymous reviewer of Wolf's fiction declared that "Modern Jewish life—in San Francisco—is the theme of these books, especially the relations of Jew and Christian developed by modern equality of intercourse."[4] The laudatory appraisal in the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute Library Journal concluded with a testament to Wolf's "undoubted genius" (5). Writing about "San Francisco Women Who Have Achieved Success" for the Overland Monthly in 1904, Rabbi and Professor E. P. Irwin included a short profile of Emma Wolf among the artists, writers, and musicians selected for regional recognition. By the time Other Things Being Equal had reached its third edition, the Chicago-based English-language Jewish monthly the American Jewess extolled Wolf's bold treatment of the "Question of intermarriage," remarking that "it is perhaps for the first time that an American author ventures into a romance to attack the racial and religious prejudices of the Jews, trying to establish a closer relationship between Jews and Gentiles" (Sonneschien 294). The editor of Emanu-El, the journal of San Francisco's largest synagogue, described Emma Wolf on March 4, 1910, as "the well-known California writer, whose works, by the way are much appreciated in the

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[4] "Miss Emma Wolf," Mechanics' Institute Library Journal, 5 (1901):3.

Eastern States and in England."[5] During the first decade of the twentieth century, Wolf gained popularity as a frequent contributor to The Smart Set: A Magazine of Cleverness. By the end of her life, Emma Wolf's literary achievements were sufficiently well regarded for her accomplishments to be recounted in Who's Who in American Jewry ("Wolf, Emma," Who's Who 759).

Although Wolf enjoyed success at the turn of the twentieth century, by the opening of the twenty-first century, her fiction was out-of-print and her name relegated to a minimal entry in surveys of Jewish-American women writers. Despite Emma Wolf's contemporary acclaim, interest in her work had dissipated by the 1940s. In 1974, Louis Harap included an analysis of Wolf's Jewish novels in The Image of the Jew in American Literature, but from this point onwards, Wolf's name languished until scholars like Diane Lichtenstein, Barbara Rose, and most notably, Barbara Cantalupo, took a renewed interest in Wolf's fiction in the 1990s. Despite Emma Wolf's distinction as an American-born, English-speaking native of California, Wolf's West Coast fiction, though contemporaneous with that of Abraham Cahan (1860-1951) has not appeared in any anthology of Jewish American literature. Even with the publication of a twenty-first-century edition of Other Things Being Equal, few Americans are familiar with Emma Wolf's narratives. Her achievement seems to have been either overshadowed by the contemporary accomplishments of American-born, Jewish women activists on the East Coast or neglected in the aftermath of the deluge of literature produced by the second

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[5] Qtd. in Barbara Cantalupo, Introduction, Other Things Being Equal (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2002)14.

wave of Eastern European Jews who settled in the tenements of New York's Lower East Side in the 1880s and 1890s.

Extricating Emma Wolf's oeuvre from obscurity raises questions about the reasons for her long absence from the registrar of literary and social accomplishments of her nineteenth-century contemporaries. Why was a successful, American-born, Jewish woman writer side-lined for a century? By revisiting Wolf's Jewish novels, Other Things Being Equal and Heirs of Yesterday, readers recover and rediscover a different voice from a different section of the country that vocalizes startlingly assertive opinions about the interrelationships between Jews and Christians in the final decade of the nineteenth century.

As a life-long San Franciscan, Emma Wolf had little in common with her Yiddish-speaking counterparts on the East Coast. When Emma Wolf's parents arrived in the West in the 1850s, San Francisco was "the hoped-for New York of the Pacific" (Rischin, "Jewish Experience" 34). Historian Moses Rischin's study, The Jews of the American West, affirms that the San Francisco of Wolf's childhood was a developing center of Jewish life and that "With 16,000 Jews in the 1870s, San Francisco more than any other city west of the Hudson became the natural site for embryonic Jewish cultural and intellectual life" ("Jewish Experience" 35). Emma Wolf, in documenting Jewish life from the Far West, wrote out of a thriving Jewish experience that had been overshadowed by her East Coast contemporaries. It is the aim of this chapter to recover this remnant of West Coast Jewish life, composed by one of the very few native-born, Jewish-American novelists—male or female-- who wrote in the 1890s. In her first novel, Other Things

Being Equal, Wolf explores issues of communal concern to Jews and common concern to women. Wolf is particularly engaged by nineteenth-century perceptions of women in sickness and in love.

Within the context of nineteenth-century Jewish life, Emma Wolf was a romantic rebel. Although she was not the first American author to broach the topic of intermarriage between Christians and Jews, her first novel nevertheless marks a pivotal moment in multicultural America's ongoing conversation about assimilation, pluralism and ethnicity. Wolf, as a Jewish woman in the Far West, reframes questions regarding national and religious identity that have been part of the American consciousness since the Colonial period. In the eighteenth century, Charles Brockton Brown, often identified as America's first professional writer, recounts in his two-part novel, Arthur Mervyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793, the union of a Christian and a Jewess. The implications of this fictional union resonated with national, social and religious agendas already nascent in America.[6] Historically, American literature has focused on unions between Protestants and either Jews or Catholics, who, as religious minorities, were subjected to prejudice and discrimination. The effort to identify nineteenth-century fictional accounts of intermarriage between Christians and Jews often begins, somewhat unexpectedly with, Henry Harland, a Protestant from Connecticut, who returns to the theme of Jewish intermarriage in three novels, As It Was Written (1885), Mrs. Peixada, (1886), and The Yoke of the Thorah (1887).

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[6] Arthur Mervyn is the first part of a two-volume work that was published in May 1799. In the novel, Ascha, a Jewess, converted to Anglicanism when she married her first husband, but Arthur Mervyn persists in his identification of Ascha as a Jew. Charles Brockton Brown, Arthur Mervyn; Or, Memoirs of the Year 1793 [1799] (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1887).

Emma Wolf is among the first Jewish-American women writers to investigate the full palate of conundrums that materialize from exogamous marriage in nineteenth-century American literature. In penning one of the earliest explorations of a marriage between a "Jewess" and a Gentile in 1892, Wolf addressed interlocking questions pertaining to race, religion, and gender as she examined the multiple allegiances that Jewish women in America had to negotiate. Hasia Diner, a professor of American Jewish history and co-author of Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present, confirms that "Intermarriage was common in America from the earliest colonial days, but by the 1820s it was becoming increasingly controversial. With growing immigration and ever-larger numbers of native-born offspring, Jewish communities, at least the larger ones, were now large enough to offer a reasonable choice of potential marriage partners "(91).

Emma Wolf's narrative of Jewish interdenominational marriage predates the literature produced by many of her Yiddishkeit [Yiddish speaking] peers. Wolf's West Coast Jewish contemporaries, Gertrude Stein (1874-1946), who spent her girlhood in Oakland, California, and Harriet Lane Levy (1867-1950), the drama critic for the San Francisco Call, safeguard Jewish endogamy. As a student at Radcliff College in 1896, Gertrude Stein subscribed to the idea that even non-practicing Jews should avoid mixed marriages, writing that "non-inter-marriage [is] the *sine qua non* of Judaism . . . for inter-marriage would be the death blow of the race"(Feinstein 51).

Concerns about intermarriage are endemic throughout Jewish history, and the subject attracted several Jewish-American novelists, especially in the opening decades of the

twentieth century, as the massive influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe acclimated to American life. In "Longings and Renunciations: Attitudes Towards Intermarriage in Early Twentieth Century Jewish American Novels," Adam Sol points to the examination of intermarriages in Edward Steiner's The Mediator (1907) and two of Ezra Brudno's novels, The Fugitive (1904) and The Tether (1908). Sol's study concludes with the assessment that "the most thoughtful Jewish writers of this period looked on intermarriage with considerable ambivalence, and often portrayed their characters as ultimately rejecting the benefits of complete assimilation in favor of identification with their ethnic heritage" (215). Other Things Being Equal anticipates by two decades many of the familiar Jewish-American novels and memoirs about interfaith marriage.[7] Wolf's atypical remedy in Other Things Being Equal exhibits extraordinary foresight because the novel promotes a resolution that more closely approximates twenty-first-century accommodations than nineteenth-century practices.

Although intermarriage was a common construct for fiction, most nineteenth-century representations reverted to the preservationist paradigm, with the Jewish partner deciding against the exigencies of a mixed marriage. Even the American Jewess (1895-1899), which described itself as "the only magazine in the world devoted to the interests of Jewish women" vacillated between opposing viewpoints, at times advocating female autonomy and, on other occasions, advancing Jewish women as religious

[7] Jewish-American novels and memoirs that confront intermarriage include Mary Antin's The Promised Land (1912), Sydney Nyburg's The Chosen People (1917), Fannie Hurst's Humoresque (1919), Anzia Yezierska's Salome of the Tenements (1923) and Bread Givers (1925); Marian Spitzer's Who Would Be Free (1924), Fannie Hurst's Appasionata (1926), and Ludwig Lewisohn's The Island Within (1928). Adelina Cohnfeldt Lust's 1899 novel A Tent of Grace depicts intermarriage but is set in mid-nineteenth-century Germany.

preservationists.[8] Rosa Sonneschein's review of Other Things Being Equal in the American Jewess applauded the Wolf's interfaith remedy:

> It is perhaps for the first time that an American writer ventures in a romance to attack the racial and religious prejudice of the Jews, trying to establish a closer social relationship between Jews and Gentiles. This is done by pure and simple motives, without violating existing faiths. Matrimony is freed from religious environments and placed plainly on social grounds. "Other Things Being Equal" is in all its phases a deeply interesting story. . . . Orthodoxy finally yields to the power of humanity. Without sensationalism or sentimentality the climax of the story is reached. Jewish religious scruples crumble into dust when attacked by the strong impulses of the human heart. (Sonneschein 294-95)

Endorsing the novel's interfaith agenda, the review concludes with the rhetorical question, "'Why should Christians and Jews not marry?' asks and answers the author, ingeniously holding out the possibility of such a union without violating religious convictions" (Sonneschein 295).

The conflicted consciousness that surrounded intermarriage is attested to by the American Jewess's serialized publication of Friedrich Kolbenheyer's novel Jewish Blood

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[8] The American Jewess Project explains that the American Jewess was "founded and edited by Rosa Sonneschein (1847-1932), it offered the first sustained critique, by Jewish women, of gender inequities in Jewish worship and communal life. Assembled and digitalized for online access by the Jewish Women's Archive, this digital reproduction of the 8 volumes of *The American Jewess* was assembled from the collections of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Klau Library, Brandeis University Libraries, the Library of Congress, and the Jewish Women's Archive." American Jewess 21Oct. 2007. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/amerjewess>.

between April 1896 and October 1896.[9] Kolbenheyer's story recounts the vicissitudes of Abraham and Sarah Nieder and their sons, Aaron and Jacob, whose tribulations begin when the kindly Jewish family adopts an orphaned Catholic girl, Clara, promising her dying parents that she will be raised within her faith. Over the years, both sons fall in love with Clara. The elder brother, Aaron, who is "sickly, ugly and deformed" (Kolbenheyer 392), finds salvation in his unspoken devotion to Clara and in his secret conversion to Christianity, which he declares "was indeed the religion of love" (Kolbenheyer 389). When Jacob openly confesses his desire to marry Clara, the Jewish patriarch admonishes his younger son for transgressing racial and religious boundaries. Abraham Nieder emphatically announces that "the most suicidal of all our [Jewish] faults and follies is the introduction of mixed marriages" (Kolbenheyer 507). In deference to his father's objections, Jacob abandons his intention to marry the Nieders' Catholic ward. With both brothers in love with her, Clara flees the Nieder household with Aaron in pursuit. By the end of the novel, Aaron has located Clara, but he expires from exhaustion before he can be reunited with her. Aaron's parents follow their son's dying wish and bury their eldest child beneath a "simple marble cross, with a wreath of oak leaves, and this inscription: '*To the memory of Aaron Nieder—a Man, a Jew, a Christian*'" (Kolbenheyer 615). The epitaph on Aaron's headstone reconfirms the narrative's

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[9] Friedrich Kolbenheyer, "Jewish Blood, I" American Jewess 2:7 (Apr. 1896):329-34.
---. "Jewish Blood II," American Jewess 2.8 (May 1896):389-95.
---. "Jewish Blood, II" American Jewess 2.9 (June 1896):447-53.
---. "Jewish Blood, II" American Jewess 2.10 (July 1896):505-14.
---. "Jewish Blood, II" American Jewess 2.11 (Aug. 1896):563-69.
---. "Jewish Blood, II" American Jewess 2.12 (Sept. 1896):613-16.

conviction regarding the indelibility of Jewish blood. Following Aaron's demise, Jacob continues his brother's grail-like quest for the errant Clara. Jacob finally finds the ailing Clara, and they marry, but shortly thereafter Clara expires. Returning home, Jacob reassures his parents that his brief marriage "was only a sacred union of the soul. In such circumstances there could be no question of a fusion of blood" (Kolbenheyer 616). Kolbenheyer's novel tenders a weighty warning to Jews who transgress religious and racial boundaries through intermarriage. Emma Wolf's novel contravenes the dire consequences of Friedrich Kolbenheyer's Jewish Blood by proposing in Other Things Being Equal that an interfaith marriage need not end in either death or disaster. Emma Wolf pens an alternative prescription for mixed marriage in which each partner retains their religious autonomy. Other Things Being Equal bends the argument on intermarriage away from a cautionary tale of woe to a reasoned acceptance of interfaith marriage.[10]

Wolf's divergence from the nineteenth-century constructs regarding intermarriage was a consequence of her American birth, her gender, and her Reform Judaism, and these factors distanced Wolf from her Eastern European Jewish contemporaries and distinguished her from her American-born peers. Other Things Being Equal differs from conventional considerations of intermarriage in significant ways. First, Emma Wolf contravenes both social and doctrinal barriers in ultimately sanctioning the union between

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[10] Distinctions between interfaith marriage, mixed marriage, in-marriage and intermarriage pertain largely to the presence or absence of conversion. In-marriage refers to an exogamous marriage wherein the non-Jewish partner converts. In Other Things Being Equal, Ruth Levice and Dr. Herbert Kemp's union entails an intermarriage wherein neither partner converts. Anne Rose explains that in the nineteenth century the terminology used to describe interfaith marriage distinguished between a "mixed marriage" and "intermarriage." A "mixed marriage" was preceded by a conversion prior to marriage in contrast to "intermarriage" where there was no conversion. Anne Rose, Beloved Strangers Interfaith Families in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 204 n44.

a Jew and a Christian. Secondly, in Judaism, historically men were more likely than women to marry outside the faith. Ruth Levice, Wolf's Jewish heroine, is among the first literary depictions of a Jewish-American woman by a Jewish-American author to make such a heretical leap. Finally, facing familial, social, and religious disapproval, Ruth Levice asserts her own American agency, preferring to remain unmarried rather than wed the man her parents favor, but whom she does not love. In depicting the social realities of interfaith marriage, Other Things Being Equal bypasses the customary nineteenth-century motives for intermarriage as either a quick route to assimilation or elevated social acceptance.

The marriage of Ruth Levice, a Jewess, to Dr. Herbert Kemp, a Unitarian, at the conclusion of Other Things Being Equal, is preceded by a thorough interrogation of the often binary claims between ethnic particularity and American assimilation, parental authority and individual autonomy, religious proscription and American tolerance. These competing concerns highlight the central questions of the late-nineteenth-century's debate over intermarriage.

The complications conjoined in the novel's unprecedented proposal, a marriage between a Jewish woman and a Christian man, are outlined in section **2.2. A Narrative of Jewish Life and Interfaith Love**. The following section, **2.3 Dispensing with the Rest Cure,** examines Wolf's consideration of the treatment for hysteria that was routinely dispensed to women. The next segment, **2.4 Interfaith Typology**, uncovers the connections between Wolf's heroine, Ruth Levice, and her Biblical progenitor. Section, **2.5 Shakespeare and the Jews,** illustrates the ways in which the Merchant of Venice

becomes a model of self-sacrifice and filial fidelity. The real-life women upon whom Emma Wolf based her protagonist's intermarriage are delineated in segment **2.6 Jewish Women in Love**. The following section, **2.7 Intermarriage: Jewish Prohibition and American Censure,** provides the religious and social contexts for the extended debate on intermarriage. A textual analysis of the disputation over intermarriage unfolds in section **2.8 A Marriage of Differences.** The conclusion, **2.9 Love Jewish-American Style,** assesses the ways in which Wolf's divergence from prevailing ideologies differentiated and distinguished Other Things Being Equal from other novels of her era.

Other Things Being Equal explores a range of social and gender controversies involving the Rest Cure, the emergence of the New Woman, and the tensions inherent in a bifurcated identity; however, the debate over interfaith marriage eclipses other concerns. It is the intent of this chapter to explore the unconventional ways in which Wolf in Other Things Being Equal analyzes the contentious issues of the her era as a minority in multiple categories: as a woman in a male-dominated society, as one of a handful of American-Jewish women writing novels in English in the late-nineteenth century, as a pioneering Jewish writer of the American West, and finally, as a Jew in Protestant America. At the forefront of Wolf's agenda in Other Things Being Equal is a reconsideration of issues that impacted the lives of middle-class Jewish women in San Francisco in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. In Other Things Being Equal, Wolf installs a framework upon which to build her defense of interfaith marriage by first examining nineteenth-century perceptions of women, particularly Jewish women. In the opening chapters of Other Things Being Equal, Wolf offers a nuanced rejection of the

Rest Cure, the prevailing treatment for female anxiety. In reassessing the efficacy of the Rest Cure, Wolf contrasts opposing models for women and rejects the Victorian cult of True Womanhood in favor of the emerging heuristic for the Progressive Age, the New Woman. The initial examination of the models available for Jewish women in the closing decade of the nineteenth century establishes Wolf's heroine, Ruth Levice, as an independent woman who questions the conventions upon which her mother, Esther Levice, has patterned her life. Wolf's feminism is modulated, but her interest in the emergent New Woman is a subject to which she will return in her subsequent fiction, most notably in her third novel, The Joy of Life (1896).

Although Emma Wolf wrote secular fiction, Other Things Being Equal is decidedly sectarian, with its perspective attentively focused on the ways in which an assimilated, middle-class Jewish family and the attendant Jewish community react to intermarriage. Wolf's novel follows the dilemmas of a Jewish heroine, Ruth Levice, whose affection for a Christian man bewilders her Jewish parents and baffles the greater Jewish community of San Francisco. Wolf turns to the Old Testament, particularly to the Book of Ruth, as the platform upon which to build her protagonist's character and also as the foundation that sustains the novel's protracted defense of interfaith marriage.

2.2 A Narrative of Jewish Life and Interfaith Marriage

The plot of Other Things Being Equal centers on the comfortable, middle-class Jewish family of Jules and Esther Levice and their daughter Ruth. Mrs. Levice exhausts herself with her social obligations, whereas the erudite patriarch, Jules Levice, serves as his daughter's educational tutor and moral mentor. For the past twelve years, Jules'

French-born nephew, Louis Arnold, has lived with his American relatives, assisting his uncle with his business affairs. Inevitably, in Other Things Being Equal, which blends American realism with Jewish middle-class manners, love does not run smoothly. As time passes, the dour and dutiful Louis develops an ardent but secret affection for Ruth that remains unrequited, especially following Ruth's introduction to Dr. Herbert Kemp, who is a Unitarian. The mutual attraction between the family's Christian caregiver and Ruth Levice, a committed Jew, fuels the novel's ensuing argument over intermarriage. Ruth's loyalties are splintered between her attachment to her family and her desire for self-fulfillment. The familial, cultural, racial, religious, social, and feminist complications that beset interfaith marriage in late-nineteenth-century America are at the forefront of Wolf's inaugural effort. Although the novel concludes in the marital union between a Jewish woman and a Christian man, Wolf, in many ways, positions her accession to interfaith marriage on new grounds.

The illicit romance between a Jew and a Gentile that leads to the novel's catalytic conflict unfolds gradually as Wolf's narrative begins by probing the stereotypes that restricted women within nineteenth-century America and the West Coast Jewish community. Emma Wolf was not an ardent feminist, yet Other Things Being Equal promotes a subversive agenda regarding the prescriptive role allocated to Jewish-American women nearly two decades before California granted women the right to vote in 1911. Other Things Being Equal implies that daughters might be well advised to pattern their lives after male rather than female paradigms. As the narrative opens, Ruth Levice, a twenty-one year-old, is "coming out" and has only recently been emancipated

from her father's tutelage. Jennie Lewis, Ruth's cousin, is scandalized by Ruth's unconventional upbringing and finds "The idea of a father having sole care of a daughter up to her twenty-first birthday, and then delivering her like a piece of joint property, over to her mother . . . contrary to nature"(OTBE 64). Under her father's guidance, Ruth has received a liberal education that encourages behavior initiated by independent judgment rather than social conformity. From observation of her mother's treatment for hysteria, Ruth recognizes the need to transgress socially constructed religious and gender stereotypes in order to craft an independent identity that privileges female autonomy and self-fulfillment.

2.3 Dispensing with the Rest Cure

Throughout Other Things Being Equal and even more conspicuously in Wolf's third novel, The Joy of Life (1896), readers are privy to the transition from the ideals of True Womanhood promoted during the Gilded Age to the reforms demanded by the New Woman in the Progressive Era. The dynamic shift in gender roles and expectations is enacted in the contrast between Mrs. Levice, who succumbs to "female-hysteria," and her daughter Ruth, for whom her father's life provides a more meaningful model upon which to craft her own identity.

Having attained her majority at the age of twenty-one, Ruth commences her social education commences under her mother's guidance. The instruction that Ruth receives from her mother, Esther Levice, devolves into a cautionary tale regarding the haplessness and hopelessness of following the social prescription for the nineteenth-century ideal of True Womanhood. The expectations and inanity of an upper-middle-class social life have

made Esther Levice "nervous and hysterical" (OTBE 64). In addition to fulfilling the social courtesies, the narrator of Other Things Being Equal concedes "It is almost an article of faith with many a Jewess that her house be kept as clean as if at any moment a search-warrant for dirt might be served upon her" (78). Wolf's satiric gibe reminds readers of her authorial skepticism regarding the prescriptive roles delegated to women in middle-class households. Wolf's novel clearly implies that the vacuity of a woman's life contributes to nervous collapse. Motivated by heartfelt concern, Mr. Levice confides to Ruth that he has arranged for his wife to be surreptitiously observed by a physician whom he esteems as "a man of great dignity" and "with the highest reputation for skill" (OTBE 70). When Ruth is introduced to Dr. Herbert Kemp, her father warns her, "Don't lose your head when you talk to him" (70). Ruth's confident and pragmatic rejoinder is, "Why should I?" Her father answers, "Because he is a magnificent fellow; and I wish my daughter to hold her own before a man I admire so heartily" (70). Ruth learns from her father that he expects her to act with as much wit and intelligence as a man.

Initially, Ruth and her father follow Dr. Kemp's orders, believing that the prescribed Rest Cure will restore Mrs. Levice's mental and physical health. As she administers care to her mother, Ruth looks askance at the conditions that precipitated the breakdown. Ruth confides to her cousin, Jennie Lewis, that she would gladly forego the constant round of receptions that have taken their toll on her mother. As others have noted, Mrs. Levice is not precisely a Jewish replica of Jane Austen's Mrs. Bennet in Pride and Prejudice, but Esther's priorities are centered on fashionable display and social approbation. The narrator dryly quips, that Mrs. Levice considered "a good appearance"

as "one of the most pressing duties" (OTBE 91). Mrs. Levice embraces a paradigm of femininity that accedes to the social conventions of Jewish-American, middle-class domesticity. The prevailing medical authority submitted that the stress of meeting social expectations contributed to hysteria, a malady frequently ascribed to women. Hysteria, derived from the Latin word for womb, was a general term applied in the nineteenth century to a wide spectrum of nervous disorders, but typically, "Victorian medical and scientific communities linked women's sexual organs—their 'wandering wombs'--to a propensity for insanity"(Mitchell, "Nervousness" 144).

Dr. Herbert Kemp witnesses Mrs. Esther Levice's nervous attack at a social reception. The following day, he diagnoses her condition as hysteria and then prescribes a "food and rest cure" (OTBE 81). Dr. Kemp's remedy follows the standard nineteenth-century treatment devised by America's leading nerve specialist, Dr. S.[ilas] Weir Mitchell (1828-1914), whose writings about the maladies suffered by Civil War veterans led to his preeminence in the treatment of neurasthenia or nervous disorders. For cases of hysteria and invalidism, that is, chronic illness in women, Mitchell devised a treatment regimen consisting of isolation, bed rest, overeating and therapeutic massage. The medical assumptions propounded by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell and followed by the fictional Dr. Herbert Kemp in Other Things Being Equal seem preposterous in the twenty-first century. For instance, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell contended in "The Evolution of the Rest Treatment" that "surplus fat was believed to help fight moral and mental strain" (149). Although Mitchell's Rest Cure would eventually be discredited, the success he claimed in treating shell-shocked Civil War veterans was a testament to the presumed efficacy of the

Rest Cure. Dr. Mitchell's palliative care incorporated rest, a plentiful diet, and vigorous massage. The primary dilemma posed by the Rest Cure entailed finding a means to offset the deleterious effects of inertia, and Dr. Mitchell believed he remedied this problem through a program of "exercise without exertion" ("Evolution"148).[11]

Wolf's interest in the Rest Cure is not unexpected because cases of purported female-hysteria were at their peak between 1870 and 1910 (Bauer, "Introduction"134). By 1893, Sigmund Freud published his findings in "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena," but the nation embraced the efficacy of Weir Mitchell's Wear and Tear, or Hints for the Overworked (1887) that aligned the mental state of the individual and the general well being of the nation. Moreover, Mitchell believed, and the country concurred, that incessant work—whether by men in the business world or women on the social circuit—was ruining the nation's health. Emma Wolf's re-consideration of the gender roles for women, in sickness and in health, is situated midway between Ibsen's "A Doll's House" (1879) and Virginia Wolf's "A Mark on the Wall" (1917). In probing the efficacy of the Rest Cure in Other Things Being Equal, Emma Wolf resisted the prevailing medical wisdom of the 1890s.

Initially, it appears as if Dr. Herbert Kemp in Other Things Being Equal takes Dr. Mitchell's prescriptive measures to heart. Contrary to other critical interpretations of the

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[11] This remedy came to Dr. Mitchell as he recollected a case where "I had seen a man, known as a layer on of hands, use rough rubbing, for a gentleman who was in a state of paresis [brain syphilis]." By "rough rubbing," Dr. Mitchell is referring to massage therapy. Dr. Mitchell recalled that "I asked myself why rubbing might not prove competent to do for the muscles and tardy circulation what voluntary exercise does. I said to myself this might be exercise without exertion." Dr. Mitchell believed that massage, or rough rubbing, would offset the Rest Cure's prolonged confinement. Later, Dr. Mitchell discovered "the application of electricity to parts of the body" as yet another mechanism to ward off the detrimental effects of immobility. See S. Weir Mitchell, "The Evolution of the Rest Treatment," 1904. Rpt. in Dale Bauer, ed., 'The Yellow Wallpaper': A Bedford Cultural Edition. By Charlotte Perkins Gilman. 1892 (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998)148.

novel that imply a kind of informed consent to Dr. Kemp's administration of the Rest Cure, Wolf inflicts the prescribed treatment on the prostrate Mrs. Levice more as an object lesson in subjugation rather than a validation of its utility. Dr. Kemp, a nerve specialist, witnessing Esther Levice's attack of hysteria, places "both hands upon her [Esther Levice's] shoulders" (OTBE 76), a telling acknowledgement of his role as a Christian healer. Kemp's instructions specify that Mrs. Levice "Must stay in bed and see no one but her immediate family" (81). Most importantly, Ruth must see that her mother "hears and reads nothing exciting" because "her mind must be kept unoccupied" (81). The family dutifully follows Dr. Kemp's orders and Mrs. Levice acquiesces to the regimen of food and rest.

The Rest Cure basically infantilizes women and Wolf certainly recognized this aspect of the therapy as Ruth informs her mother that "we are going to make a baby of you, mamma" (82). The treatment plan not only isolated and immobilized women but removed all supposedly stressful stimuli, including any form of work or intellectual inquiry, especially reading and writing. The untenable restraints of the Rest Cure are apparent to Mrs. Levice's nephew, Louis Arnold, who frankly confides to his cousin Ruth, "What I am surprised at is that my aunt submits to this confining treatment" (84). Perplexed by his aunt's inactivity, Louis continues, "I do not understand how, after a week of it, she has not rebelled" (84). Ruth explains that her mother's compliance –not submission—is an act of love. If her husband believes that the Rest Cure will heal her, then Esther will do what she can to please her husband and ease his mind. Through Ruth's explanation of her mother's seeming surrender and Louis Arnold's objections,

Wolf registers her own reservations about the efficacy of the Rest Cure. If further proof were required regarding Wolf's leeriness of the supposed value of the Cure, it is recorded in Mrs. Esther Levice's own protestation that "I'm beginning to feel as impassive and stupid as a well-fed animal"(90). Esther Levice's metaphor is certainly not an endorsement of a treatment widely prescribed in 1892. Dr. Kemp leaves Mrs. Levice's bedside and will not return until Friday. Mrs. Levice testily reminds the doctor, "And today is Tuesday! Am I to see no one till then?" (90). Dr. Kemp impatiently lectures Mrs. Levice, "You're a very fortunate invalid. Illness with you is cushioned in every conceivable corner. I wish I could make you divide some of your blessings. As I can't I wish you would appreciate them as they deserve" (90). As a witness to this exchange, Ruth ruminates: "The doctor's few words had given her food for thought" (90). By her gentle ridicule of the treatment, Wolf marks the Rest Cure itself as a suspect practice that does much to demean women and little to help them.

Wolf was not a radical feminist, but she was alert to the social inequities that impacted the lives of women. Wolf's depiction of the Rest Cure coincided with a biting remonstrance of the therapy in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," published in the same year as Other Things Being Equal. Gilman (1860-1935), the grandniece of Harriet Beecher Stowe, resided in Oakland, California, across the Bay from Wolf's Pacific Heights home, and was a fervent social reformer in contrast to Wolf's temperate interrogation of the complexities of women's lives. In 1888, following the birth of her daughter, Charlotte Perkins Gilman was treated by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, and in her autobiography, Gilman relates that "The Yellow Wallpaper" was written "to convince

him [Dr. S. Weir Mitchell] of the error of his ways" (Bauer, Introduction 4). In scrutinizing the Rest Cure, Wolf is not as strident in her opposition as her contemporary, Charlotte Perkins Gilman; nonetheless, Wolf tacitly rejects the efficacy of Dr. Mitchell's popular remedy and clearly objects to the infantilization of women who suffer from nervous disorders. Gilman's short story and Wolf's first novel presciently anticipate the revolutionary Studies on Hysteria [1893-1895], co-authored by Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer, that would not only discredit the Rest Cure but transform the methodology of modern psychology.[12]

Compared to vocal feminists of the era such as Nellie Bly (1864-1922) and Jane Addams (1860-1935), Emma Wolf was decidedly soft-spoken. Wolf bears some resemblance to her co-religionist and San Francisco-born reformer, Ray (Rachel) Frank (1861-1948), popularly known as the "girl rabbi of the Golden West" and "female messiah," who "challenged Jews' religious and gender-based assumptions" while sustaining some very traditional values, including opposition to the suffragette cause (Sarna, "Awakening" 54-55). An attentive reading of Wolf's first novel reveals that she was neither silent nor uncritical of the conventions that circumscribed the lives of Jewish women in America in the final decade of the nineteenth century. It is for a glimpse of the transformation of everyday lives of middle-class Jewish women on the West Coast that

[12] Freud's famous case study of hysteria, Anna O., was based on Josef Breuer's patient, Bertha Pappenheim. In contrast to Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, Freud conceived of hysteria as a disease of the mind rather than the womb. In their joint publication, Studies in Hysteria [*Studien uber Hysterie*], 1893-1895, Freud and Breuer claim that through their treatment, "Each individual hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we succeeded in bringing clearly to light the memory of the event by which it was provoked and in arousing its accompanying affect, and when the patient had described the event in the greatest possible detail and put the affect into words. Studies in Hysteria, [1893-1895]. Trans. and ed. by John Strachey with the collaboration of Anna Freud (NY: Basic Books, 2000) 6.

Wolf's fiction reminds readers that American-Jewish history and literature was transcribed from right to left, that is, from West to East, as well as from left to right, from East to West. Throughout Other Things Being Equal, Wolf crafts a thoughtful inquiry into institutionalized practices and quietly registers her objections to the prevailing binary perceptions of women as either hysterical True Women or self-assertive New Women. As the narrative of Other Things Being Equal unfolds, Wolf's novel becomes progressively iconoclastic in contravening prevailing conventions. By initially invalidating the Rest Cure and its (mis)treatment of women, Wolf prepares her readers for the subsequent assault on even more momentous customs, especially the familial, social and religious opposition to interfaith marriage.

2.4 Interfaith Typology

In framing her exploration of intermarriage, Wolf embraces the freedoms accorded Americans to select their matrimonial partners regardless of race, religion or creed. Wolf's endorsement of interfaith marriage emanates from conspicuously Jewish contexts located in the Kethuvim, or Writings. In interrogating the late-nineteenth-century's prevailing objections to intermarriage, Wolf never minimizes her heroine's Jewish affiliation, despite Ruth Levice's acculturated American disposition. Wolf's insistence on constructing the intermarriage debate from a woman's perspective is evident from the Jewish sources upon which Wolf draws her inspiration. Wolf positions her heroine squarely between two biblical parables, one derived from the Old Testament's narrative of a loyal proselyte related in the Book of Ruth and the other inspired by an allegory about the Rose of Sharon mentioned in the Song of Solomon by a

beautiful woman, only identified as the Shulamite, who compares herself to the rose of Sharon: "I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys" (Jewish Study Bible, Sol. 2.1). Drawing upon these biblical sources, Emma Wolf frames the parameters for the novel's ensuing debate on intermarriage.

The insertion of an allegory about the Rose of Sharon emanates from a thoughtless remark by the otherwise tolerant and charitable Dr. Kemp, who complains to Ruth that the patient whom he has just treated does not heed his advice. Kemp abruptly informs the patient's wife that her husband is "little short of an idiot" (OTBE 96) for overeating and stuffing himself when he has a weak stomach. The physician continues his diatribe in the carriage with Ruth, suggesting that his patient's obstinate overindulgence is probably the result of habit because "Jewish appetite is known to dote on the fat of the land" (97). Neither Ruth nor the reader knows exactly how to react to Dr. Kemp's decidedly anti-Semitic remark. Wolf prefaced this episode with evidence of Dr. Kemp's good character. He cares for the indigent, he disregards class distinctions in his treatment of his patients, and he has earned the complete trust of the Levice family, who sought his medical advice. How, then, is Ruth to react to Dr. Kemp's stereotypic assertion? Ruth snaps back, "We [Jews] always make the reservation that the fat be clean" (OTBE 97). Unable to redact his bigoted comment, Dr. Kemp attempts to amend his offense by acknowledging, "As a race, most of their [Jewish] characteristics redound to their honor" (97). In his inventory of commendable characteristics, Dr. Kemp enumerates "high morality, loyalty, intelligence, filial respect" (98) among the admirable Jewish traits. Ruth, as the novel's ambassador for Reform Judaism, interjects the parable of the Rose of

Sharon to illustrate the state of renewal that defines the Jew in American society. She relates the following story to Kemp:

> "A pilgrim was about to start on a voyage to the Holy Land. In bidding a friend good-bye, he said: 'In that far land to which I am journeying, is there not some relic, some sacred souvenir of the time beautiful [sic], that I can bring you?' The friend mused awhile. 'Yes,' he made answer finally; 'there is a small thing, and one not difficult to obtain. I beg of you to bring me a single rose from the plains of Sharon.' The pilgrim promised, and departed. On his return he presented himself before his friend. 'You have brought it?' he cried. 'Friend,' answered the pilgrim, sadly, 'I have brought your rose; but alas! after all this weary traveling it is now but a poor withered thing.' 'Give it to me!' exclaimed the friend, eagerly. The other did so. True, it was lifeless and withered; not a vestige remained of its once fragrant glory. But, as the man held it tenderly in his hand, memory and love untold overcame him, and he wept in ecstasy. And as his tears fell on the faded Rose, lo! the petals sprang up, flushed into life; an exquisite perfume enveloped it—it had been revived in all its beauty. Sir, in the words of the rabbi, 'In the light of toleration and love, we too have revived, we too are looking up.'"(OTBE 99)

Ruth implies that Judaism has advanced under the tolerance of American society, and like the wilted Rose of Sharon, Jewish Americans have been restored from their former afflicted condition. Wolf injects the parable of the Rose of Sharon into the narrative because its message of "toleration and love" prefigures her narrative intention to authorize intermarriage in Other Things Being Equal. The parable of the Rose of Sharon,

with its revivalist message, conveys a decidedly rosier picture of universal brotherhood than either Ruth Levice or Dr. Herbert Kemp experience when their plans for an interfaith marriage materialize. Nevertheless, the typological Rose of Sharon presents a regenerative ideal to which the interfaith couple in Other Things Being Equal aspires.

The Book of Ruth also functions as a typological template for Ruth Levice's endorsement of intermarriage in Other Things Being Equal. Traditional exegesis frequently portrays the biblical figure of Ruth as the archetypal proselyte who, through her conversion, becomes a *ger tzedek*, a righteous stranger. More importantly, the Book of Ruth's atypical and counter-intuitive acceptance of strangers into the House of Israel coincides with narrative design of Other Things Being Equal. Hermeneutical analyses variously suggest that the Book of Ruth champions models of "loyalty and commitment that go beyond the bounds of law or duty" (Berlin1578). Exegetes also point to the biblical story as "a paradigm of conversion in the faith" (Freedman 1144). However, in the late nineteenth century, Emma Wolf was undoubtedly attracted to the romance of the biblical folktale that culminates in the marriage of a Jewish man to a non-Jewish woman. Wolf also would have found the loyalty of a daughter to a parent particularly moving. Wolf valorizes Ruth Levice, the heroine of Other Things Being Equal, by her nominal identification with her scriptural archetype. Wolf extrapolates the ethical values of filial devotion and human sympathy from the biblical story and reshapes these precepts to the contours and circumstances of her San Francisco narrative. Most significantly, Wolf embraces the overriding tenet of the Book of Ruth that points to the unforeseen rewards of tolerance that resonate throughout Other Things Being Equal. With its emphasis on

women, conversion, marriage, and forbearance, the Book of Ruth provides the working template from which Wolf crafts Other Things Being Equal.

Some Biblical scholars ascribe the Book of Ruth to the early exilic period (900-750 BCE), and others to the time before the monarchy "In the days when the chieftains ruled (560-500 BCE)."[13] By the late nineteenth century when Emma Wolf returns to the biblical story of Ruth, Jewish law (Halachah) regarding marriage had not changed and interfaith marriage was still forbidden.[14] Despite the assimilation endorsed by America's Reform Jews, courtship and marriage outside the faith was not only atypical but socially unacceptable and religiously proscribed. Other Things Being Equal violates the marital barrier between Christians and Jews and contravenes social as well as religious customs. As Ruth Levice and Dr. Herbert Kemp begin their courtship, Wolf perches her protagonists on the brink of social and religious blasphemy.

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[13] The variant dating of the Book of Ruth alters the meaning of the narrative. Although there is some debate about when the events in the Book of Ruth transpired, some scholars propose that the "chieftains" or judges referred to in verse 1:1 refer to the period before the monarchy. "Many scholars propose a date between 950 and 700 BCE, that is, between the time of David and the Assyrian conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Others suggest a date during the period of Babylonian exile or in the early period of the return (560-500 BCE). In the latter case, the book may be read as promising that those who return from exile will be blessed, just as Naomi was when she returned from Moab to Bethlehem. A story recounting the lineage of David might also have had special meaning at a time after the Davidic monarchy had come to an end. If the story is dated to the early exilic period, its positive depiction of Ruth the Moabite may be polemical, emphasizing, in contrast to Ezra-Nehemiah, that foreigners may be integrated into the Jewish community." Book of Ruth 1:1, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler eds., Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 1579.

[14] According to Jewish law, a Jew cannot marry a non-Jew. The Jewish law of matrilineal descent dictates that a child born of a Jewish mother is a Jew, regardless of the father's religion. Conversely, the child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother is not Jewish. Moses instructs the Israelites "You shall not intermarry with them [Canaanites]; do not give your daughters to their sons; nor take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your children from following Me to worship other gods." Deut. 7:3-4, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 383.

Wolf also extracts meaning from chronological coincidence between the annual Talmudic reading of Ruth's story and the Jewish festival of *Shavuot*. The Book of Ruth is read at *Shavuot*, the Festival of Weeks, which coincides with the spring grain harvest and commemorates the giving of the Torah to the Jews. Figuratively, *Shavuot* is understood as an eternal marriage of God and His people, Israel. The Book of Ruth re-enacts the Covenant between God and the Israelites in celebrating the union of Ruth, a widowed Moabite, and Boaz ("In Him Is Strength"), Naomi's kinsman.[15] The connections between national and personal fulfillment enacted in the Book of Ruth provide a fitting ancillary to Wolf's novel because each text can be read as epithalamia, and each narrative celebrates a marriage that surmounts differences.

In the Biblical story, Naomi ("Pleasantness") and her husband, Elimelech ("My God Is King") are driven by famine from Bethlehem, which ironically means, "The House of Bread," into Moab, a land east of the Dead Sea.[16] Elimelech dies and Naomi's sons, Mahlon ("Sickly, Destruction") and Chilion ("Consumptive, Frail") marry Moabite women.[17] After ten years, both of Naomi's sons also die. One of Naomi's daughters-in-law, Orpah ("Back of the Neck"), returns to her Moabite family, while the other, Ruth

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[15] By identifying Boaz as a *go'el,* a redeeming kinsman, Naomi suggests Boaz' "potential role in providing for Ruth and herself since a *go'el* had a special obligation to family." Book of Ruth, 2:20, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 1582.

[16] The symbolic significance of the names of people and places in the Book of Ruth is provided in the textual notes to the Book of Ruth 1:1-5, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler eds., The Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford UP, 1999)1580.

[17] The etymology of the names of Naomi's sons, Mahlon and Chilion, is derived from explications provided in The Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford UP, 1999):1580; Michael D. Coogan, ed., The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 3rd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 392; and Robert Gordis, "Personal Names in Ruth—A Note on Biblical Etymologies," Judaism 35:3 (Summer 1986):298.

("Friend," "Companion") remains with Naomi.[18] Ruth's allegiance to her mother-in-law is captured in the celebrated passage where Ruth pledges her devotion to Naomi, vowing, "For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried" (Ruth 1:16-17, Jewish Study Bible 1580). Ruth's loyalty to her mother-in-law is an act of selfless attachment to family that embraces both the memory of her dead husband and the bond she has formed with Naomi. With this declaration, Ruth fulfills her birthright as a loyal "companion" and "friend." Following Ruth's declaration of filial devotion, Naomi returns to Bethlehem accompanied by her daughter-in-law. Naomi, in turn, secures her daughter-in-law's future by arranging for Ruth to glean in the fields that belong to Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi's husband. Ultimately, Naomi engineers a variant of a levirate marriage between her daughter-in-law and her husband's kinsman, Boaz ("In Him Is Strength").[19] The couple is blessed with a son, Obed, a direct progenitor of the Davidic line. The union of Ruth, a Moabite, and Boaz, an Israelite, results in the unanticipated blessing of engendering a dynasty that would last for four centuries: "In this way the theme of family continuity and divine favor through Ruth is extended to embrace national

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[18] The meanings of the names of Naomi's daughters-in-law are provided by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., The Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford UP, 19991) 1580.

[19] The textual notes for the Book of Ruth 1:11, offer the following explanation of a levirate marriage: "According to Deut. 25:5-10, a childless widow is bound to marry her dead husband's brother. This is referred to as levirate law (from Latin '*levir*,' 'brother-in-law'). The first son of a levirate marriage will legally be the dead man's son for purposes of inheritance. Even were Naomi to give birth to more sons, they would not be obliged by levirate law to marry the widows [Orpah and Ruth], because they would not have had the same father as did the dead men [Mahon and Chilion]." Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 1580.

continuity and divine favor through David."[20] The connection between *Shavuot* and the Davidic line is reinforced by the belief that King David was born and died on *Shavuot*. By tying Ruth to the Davidic line, the intermarriage of Jew and non-Jew produces unexpected but welcome blessings. Unmistakably, Wolf's dependence upon the allusions to the Book of Ruth accentuates the munificence and unforeseen blessings of interfaith marriage.

The Book of Ruth is traditionally read as the valorization of a stranger who fulfills her adopted nation's destiny. Through her pseudo-levirate marriage to Boaz, Ruth becomes the matriarch of the Davidic dynasty. However, feminist interpretations of the Book of Ruth envision the biblical narrative as signifying more than the saga of a woman who through marriage strengthens the male hegemony on which Judean society in the time of Judges was predicated. The precise ways in which the account of the biblical Ruth inspired Emma Wolf is a matter of speculation, but it is apparent that the nineteenth-century author deployed the biblical Ruth as the model for Ruth Levice.

Emma Wolf locates in the Book of Ruth a compromise between autonomy and familial loyalty that resolves the dilemma of her nineteenth-century heroine. Mira Morgenstern suggests in "Ruth and the Sense of Self" that the biblical narrative captures a "sustained philosophical search . . . for a coherent understanding of selfhood that can include both self-affirmation and other-directed giving" (Morgenstern 131).[21] Emma Wolf extrapolates these attributes of self-fulfillment and selflessness from the Book of

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[20] Textual notes for Book of Ruth, 4:18-22, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford, UP, 1999) 1586.

[21] Mira Morgenstern, "Ruth and the Sense of Self," Judaism 48.2 (Spring 1999):131.

Ruth and endows her heroine with these qualities. The tension between self-determination and altruistic self-sacrifice complicates Ruth Levice's choices in Other Things Being Equal. If Ruth Levice marries outside her faith, she will break her father's heart. If Ruth Levice does not marry Herbert Kemp, then her own heart will be broken. The demands of familial loyalty and self-actualization are at the heart of both the biblical fable and the nineteenth-century novel.

Emma Wolf also revisits the Book of Ruth for its representation of conversion. Typologically, the Book of Ruth is regarded as the ultimate representation of conversion and Emma Wolf attaches a nuanced appraisal of this aspect of the biblical chronicle. Rabbinic exegesis envisions Ruth as the ideal convert, who, like Moses, takes the "Torah upon herself as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai" (Jewish Study Bible 1579). Although *Ruth Rabbah*, a commentary on the Book of Ruth, points to certain conversion principles, in actuality, no formal conversion takes place since "that institution did not come into existence until rabbinic times" (Jewish Study Bible 1581). Traditionally, interfaith marriages are forbidden because of the absence of conversion on the part of the non-Jewish partner. But Emma Wolf is not invested in the legalities of Ruth's conversion or the religious sanctity of her subsequent marriage to Boaz in the absence of any formal conversion. Wolf did not fashion Ruth Levice on the model of conversion that many scholars envision in traditional readings of the Book of Ruth. The halachic prohibitions against intermarriage outlined in Deuteronomy specifically ban Moabites or Ammonites from the Judean community. Given the prohibition, why does Israel accept the marriage between Boaz and Ruth, a Moabite? Boaz, a man of strength, discerns that the prohibition

was directed at males, not females, but this dialectic dodge is not one that appealed to Emma Wolf. As the intermarriage debate unfolds in Wolf's novel, this gendered exception to the ban on marriage outside the faith is reinterpreted by Wolf to mean that conversion is not a perquisite to mixed marriage. Wolf's preservationist decision permits her protagonist to sustain her personal integrity and also affirm her loyalty to her faith. In assuming these qualities of autonomy, loyalty and kindness, Ruth Levice bears the most marked resemblance to her legendary prototype. The conversion for which the canonical Ruth becomes celebrated in Emma Wolf's reinterpretation is transformed into a tribute to loyalty to family, to faith, but most notably to self. Ruth Levice was born a Jew and will remain a Jew in her marriage to a Christian. By investing Ruth Levice with the attributes of her biblical progenitor, Wolf is able to negotiate a familial truce and preserve her heroine's sense of self-respect and self-determination.

Emma Wolf extrapolates from the Book of Ruth those deeds that distinguish Ruth as an individual and account for her inclusion within the community of Israel. In the parable's most moving passage, Ruth elects to remain with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and vows, "Wherever you go, I will go" (Ruth 1:16, Jewish Study Bible 1580). This is an act of friendship, kindness, and loyalty rather than conversion. In a supreme testament of human sympathy and heartfelt kindness, Ruth pledges her loyalty to Naomi, who in exile has lost her husband and both of her sons and has returned to Bethlehem embittered by her losses. In Naomi's return from exile, Ruth becomes her companion, her comforter, and ultimately her provider. As a paradigm of "kindness," Ruth does not forsake her parent even if remaining with Naomi means that she must forfeit her own happiness and

homeland. It is from these ancient acts of companionship, loving-kindness, loyalty, and self-sacrifice that Emma Wolf mines the Book of Ruth and endows Ruth Levice with the legacy of her biblical namesake.

The nominal connection between the biblical Ruth and Wolf's heroine is an important key to understanding the symbolism of their shared name. Robert Gordis explains in "Personal Names in Ruth—a Note on Biblical Etymologies" that "the names in the Book of Ruth illustrate the rabbinic statement that a name is a key to personal destiny." According to Gordis, Ruth's name epitomizes "willingness, desire" and is descriptive of Ruth, who goes with Naomi, unlike Orpah, who ultimately "turns her back" [*oreph*] on her mother-in-law (299). In Other Things Being Equal, Ruth Levice is willing to forfeit her own happiness because she is unwilling to "turn her back" on her father. In selflessly providing comfort and companionship for her father, Ruth Levice embodies the concept of *hesed*, that is, loyalty or commitment that goes beyond the bounds of law or duty. *Hesed* is exemplified in the fidelity of Ruth to Naomi and replicated in the commitment of Ruth to her father. Ruth Levice's loyalty--modeled on Ruth's devotion to Naomi--awakens Jules Levice to the sacrifices his daughter has made for him, and he withdraws his objection to her marriage to a Christian.

The unmistakable message of the Book of Ruth is that inclusion of the stranger within the community of Israel has its rewards, and this principle would have appealed to Emma Wolf. But Wolf adjusts the biblical axiom by insisting that tolerance rather than conversion can be a source of personal and communal enrichment. In Other Things Being Equal, it is not necessary for Ruth Levice or Herbert Kemp to convert. Wolf's novel

argues not only for inclusion but also implies that there are unforeseen rewards for the acceptance of differences. Familial loyalty and tolerance of outsiders become the pivotal concerns of Other Things Being Equal, and Wolf extrapolates from the Book of Ruth a means of reconciling these competing claims.

2.5 Shakespeare and the Jews

Despite the tolerant message transmitted in the Book of Ruth, Other Things Being Equal dramatizes the Jewish antipathy to intermarriage. Ruth's busybody cousin, Jennie Lewis, is dismayed that the Levice family mingles with their Christian peers. Addressing Ruth, Jennie asks, "What does possess your parents to mix so much with Christians?" (OTBE 65). The accusatory question engenders the following exchange as Jennie inquires about Ruth's plans for the evening. Jennie begins the interrogation by asking

> "Of course you [the Levices] have an engagement for tonight?"
>
> "Yes; we're going to a reception at the Merrills'."
>
> "Christians?" came the sharp challenge.
>
> "The name speaks for itself."
>
> "What does possess your parents to mix so much with Christians?"
>
> "Fellow-feeling, I suppose. We all dance and talk alike; and as we don't hold services at receptions, wherein lies the difference?"
>
> "There is a difference; and the Christians know it as well as we Jewish people. Not only do they know it, but they show it in countless ways; and the difference, they think, is all to their credit."(OTBE 65)

Jennie's objections typify the prevailing censure of intimacy between Jews and Christians. In a novel that promotes Jewish-Christian ecumenism, Ruth underestimates the disapproval she will encounter at home and in public. Presaging her subsequent attendance at a performance of The Merchant of Venice with Dr. Herbert Kemp, Ruth has the final word in the disagreement with her cousin Jennie. Extemporizing on Shylock's famous soliloquy, Ruth asserts

> 'And why shouldn't I move on an equality with my Christian friends? We have had the same schooling, speak the same language, read the same books, are surrounded by the same elements of home refinement. Probably if they had not been congenial, my father [Jules Levice] would long ago have ceased to associate with them.'(OTBE 66)

This exchange anticipates the larger integrationist debate of the novel, the lynchpin of intermarriage, upon which Other Things Being Equal hangs. In what amounts to a Midrash on the legend recounted in the Book of Ruth, Wolf uses the biblical parable to comment on the continuity of Jewish culture and the unforeseen promise of inclusion. But, apparently, even the Levices' social inclusiveness has its limits. Jennie Lewis's misgivings are reiterated in a conversation between Ruth's parents, who disagree about the advisability of allowing their daughter to consort with a Christian man.

In Other Things Being Equal, Wolf captures the tension between inclusiveness and exclusivity when Ruth Levice appears with Dr. Kemp at the Baldwin Theatre's

production of the Merchant of Venice.[22] It does not take long for a gossip like Jennie Lewis to broadcast this breach of Jewish etiquette throughout San Francisco's Gilded Circle. Ruth Levice wishes to attend the final performance of Edwin Booth in his role as Shylock in The Merchant of Venice at the Baldwin Theatre, but her customary escort, her cousin Louis Arnold, is away; consequently, Ruth must remain at home to care for her ailing mother while Mr. Levice attends the performance. Knowing how much she desires to attend, Dr. Kemp asks if Ruth would accompany him to the theatre while Mr. Levice remains at home to be with his wife. To modern readers the doctor's invitation is well-intended, but for a Jewish woman in the 1890s to be escorted in public by a non-Jewish man was equivalent to social suicide. While not halachically proscribed, such potentially dangerous liaisons were culturally condemned. Should the relationship between Ruth Levice and Dr. Herbert Kemp, a Unitarian, lead to marriage, the Biblical injunction against endogamous marriage would be breached. At this juncture, the moral implications of the Book of Ruth resonate at full pitch in Other Things Being Equal.

Esther and Jules Levice debate the advisability of their daughter's appearance at the performance of The Merchant of Venice with a non-Jew. Mrs. Levice is reluctant to challenge social and cultural norms, whereas Mr. Levice advances a broader view of interpersonal relationships between Christians and Jews. Mr. Levice approves of his

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[22] Charles Edelman's Shakespeare in Production: " The Merchant of Venice" (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002) xvii, provides a "List of Productions" that indicates that Edwin Booth performed the role of Shylock in San Francisco twice, once in 1853 at the San Francisco Theatre when the actor was only nineteen years old, and again in 1889 when Booth was fifty-five. An anonymous review of Booth's performance, "Booth's Rendition of '*The Merchant of Venice*' at the Baldwin," published in the San Francisco Morning Call (14 March 1888) indicates that Booth's performance took place during a three-week engagement in March 1888. Whether the play was performed in 1888 or 1889, it is very likely that Emma Wolf would have attended Booth's performance.

daughter's escort, while Mrs. Levice is more circumspect and reminds her husband, "But Jules, you forget that none of our Jewish friends let their daughters go out with strangers" (OTBE 114). To which Mr. Levice retorts, "Is that part of our religion?" Mrs. Levice answers," No, but custom itself is a religion. People do talk so at every little innovation against convention" (114). Jules Levice prevails and Ruth accompanies Dr. Kemp to the theatre. The unspoken subtext of the repartee between Ruth's parents alludes to the Jewish aversion to intermarriage, the conflict that strains the nuclear Levice family, and by extension, San Francisco's middle-class Jewish community. The dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Levice recapitulates the concern for both tolerance and cultural preservation articulated in the Book of Ruth.

Following the performance of The Merchant of Venice, predictably, Cousin Jennie reports to her aunt the imprudence of the appearance of a young, attractive unmarried Jewish woman with an unattached Christian man. Jennie further alarms Mrs. Levice with the unwarranted inference that Dr. Kemp could be the father of his indigent patient Rose Delano's illegitimate child. Mr. Levice silences his niece's gossip with the caustic retort, "It's a pity she [Ruth Levice] didn't think to hand round a written explanation to her different Jewish friends in the audience" (OTBE 135). Mr. Levice is dismissive of public opinion, but Mrs. Levice "was enough of a Jewess to realize that if you dislike Jewish comment, you must never step out of the narrowly conventional Jewish pathway. That Ruth, her only daughter, should be the subject of vulgar bandying was more bitter than wormwood to her" (OTBE 135-36).

Reprimands and gossip, however, prove insufficient obstacles to the looming Jewish cataclysm, the prospect of intermarriage, which constitutes the pivotal debate that dominates the latter half of Wolf's novel. Dr. Herbert Kemp, a Unitarian, proposes to Ruth Levice, a Jew, on page 180 of Wolf's 267- page novel, and Wolf devotes nearly one-third of Other Things Being Equal exclusively to the interfaith dispute. Wolf has foreshadowed this epical event on numerous occasions, but most inevitably, it follows Ruth's rejection of Louis Arnold's marriage proposal, a match that Mrs. Levice particularly favored and promoted.

In reflecting upon the strain that intermarriage places on the Levice family and the fractiousness that resonates in the extended Jewish community, Emma Wolf references the messages of tolerance extrapolated from the parables of the Rose of Sharon and the Book of Ruth in mediating the distance between Jew and non-Jew, parent and child, husband and wife. To these biblical sources which underpin the novel's message of acceptance of differences, Wolf appends the Merchant of Venice. Ruth's sympathy for Shylock is generated by his role as a wronged parent whose daughter has eloped with a Christian and forsaken both her father and her faith. Ruth will subsequently reflect upon her duty to her father in light of Shakespeare's rendering of filial desertion in the Merchant of Venice.

2.6 Jewish Women in Love

By 1892, Emma Wolf may have drawn upon two actual examples of interfaith marriages about which she would have had direct knowledge. Wolf's younger sister Alice, the author of short fiction and the novel A House of Cards (1896), married

William MacDonald. Barbara Cantulupo's impressive biographical research recorded in "Discovering Emma Wolf, San Francisco Author," postulates that "The character of Ruth [in Other Things Being Equal] may have been a composite of her [Wolf's] friend, Rebekah Kohut, and Wolf's sister Alice, who married a Christian" (82). More astonishingly, Wolf might have grounded the intermarriage between Ruth Levice and Dr. Herbert Kemp on the marriage of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise's daughter, Helen, who eloped with James Molony, the son of a Catholic father and a Protestant mother. The couple purportedly wed in a Unitarian ceremony sometime between 1877 and 1878 (Rose 77). Barbara Cantalupo is more circumspect about Wolf's reliance upon the marriage of Helen Wise to James Molony as models for her fictional characters, but I believe that the chronological coincidences are very compelling and lend credence to Wolf's awareness of the secret marriage of Helen Wise. My research suggests that the elopement took place in 1877 or 1878, whereas Barbara Cantalupo suggests a later date, 1884, for the clandestine marriage of Helen Wise and James Molony.

In her Introduction to Other Things Being Equal, Barbara Cantalupo acknowledges that "Rabbi Wise could have been the model for Mr. Levice, who, like Rabbi Wise, reverses his initial disapproval of his daughter's marriage but amends this conjecture by stating that "The thesis that Wolf fashioned her main characters on Wise and his daughter, however, could be called into question."[23] Historian Jonathan Sarna disclaims the idea that Wolf might have modeled Ruth Levice on Helen Wise because the

[23] Barbara Cantalupo mentions 1884 as the prospective date for the marriage between Helen Wise and James Molony in this explanatory footnote appended to the Introduction to Other Things Being Equal (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2002) 44 n24.

[Wise/Molony] marriage "'did gain momentary attention when it happened, but it was subsequently hushed up.'"[24] However, Emma Wolf had a direct connection to Rabbi Wise through her childhood friend, Rebekah (neé Bettelheim) Kohut, whose father, Rabbi Albert Siegfried Bettelheim, leader of San Francisco's Ohabai Shalom congregation, was a long-standing friend of Rabbi Wise.[25] During the period between 1877 and 1887, when the Bettelheim family resided in San Francisco, Emma Wolf and Rebekah Kohut were classmates and close companions. In recollecting their friendship, Rebekah remembers that as young girls she and Emma shared their innermost convictions. Recapturing this adolescent bond in her memoir, My Portion (An Autobiography), Kohut reminisces

> But what meant most of all to me, perhaps, in those impressionable days of adolescence, was the exchange of innermost thoughts with my classmate. I had begun to doubt the whole worthwhileness of all the sacrifices it seemed to me that my father and his family were making for Judaism. What was the use of it all, I questioned. Why make a stand for separate Jewish ideals? Why not choose the easier way and be like all the rest? The struggle was too hard, too bitter. Emma Wolf was undergoing much the same inner turmoil. It meant real suffering to both of us. The

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[24] Jonathan Sarna, Qtd. in Barbara Cantalupo, Introduction, Other Things Being Equal (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2002) 44 n 24.

[25] Fred Rosenbaum reports that Albert Aaron Siegfried Bettelheim (1830-1890) was the rabbi of Ohabai Shalome, a conservative congregation that was formed in 1864 after fifty-five members seceded from Temple Emanu-El. Although Rabbi Wise was a radical reformer and Rabbi Bettelheim was not nearly as progressive as his famous friend, they remained lifelong friends despite their theological differences. Visions of Reform: Congregation Emanu-El and the Jews of San Francisco (Berkeley: Judah Magnus, 2000) 49-50.

> spiritual growing pains of adolescence are hard to bear. They cannot be laughed out of existence. (61-62)

During this period of close friendship between Emma Wolf and Rebekah Kohut, Rabbi Wise stayed at the Kohut home at 1311 Larkin Street in San Francisco. Rebekah recalls, "Shortly after our arrival in San Francisco Isaac M. Wise came to the city in behalf of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He became not only our guest but my father's inseparable companion during his stay, and we children got to adore him" (Kohut 43). Following his August 1877 visit, Wise wrote his report on the "Jewish Institutions of San Francisco," published in the American Israelite on September 14, 1877, and in his remarks about San Francisco's Jewish congregations, Wise mentions his lifelong friend, the Rev. Dr. [Albert (Aaron) S.] Bettelheim.[26]

Considering Wolf's childhood friendship with Rebekah Kohut, it is not unlikely that Emma Wolf would have followed Rabbi Wise's personal and religious activities long after Rebekah Kohut had married and relocated to New York City. Moreover, the very year that Wise visited San Francisco coincided with Helen Wise's forbidden courtship and marriage. It is not beyond reason that Rabbi Wise could have confided in his lifelong friend, Rabbi Bettelheim. While Rabbi Wise may have wished to keep his daughter's marriage to a Christian from the public, when the Cincinnati Enquirer uncovered the elopement, the newspaper sensationalized the event in a tabloid-style report bearing the

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[26] Isaac M. Wise, "Jewish Institutions," American Israelite (14 Sept. 1877):5. Rpt. in Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History 1809-1880, Ed. Ava F. Kahn (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002) 496.

headline "Cupid Conquers."[27] Additionally, Rabbi Wise's own vacillating position on intermarriage throughout his life must have caused his followers to question the basis for his reversal on this controversial topic.[28]

Intermarriages between Jews of San Francisco's Gilded Circle and non-Jews were such an anomaly that when these unions occurred, they made headlines, not only in the city's Jewish newspapers but also in the Jewish-owned San Francisco Chronicle.[29] Although Temple Emanu-El's rabbi, the Reverend Jacob Voorsanger, did officiate at intermarriages during his tenure in the rabbinate between 1889 and 1909, the incidence of interfaith unions among the Gilded Circle was rare (Rosenbaum 82-83): "Not only were marriages to non-Jews unusual for the Emanu-El elite in the late nineteenth century, but also were betrothals to anyone outside a circle of a few dozen German-Jewish clans. By World War I, the city's [San Francisco] Jewish aristocracy had become so inbred that it almost resembled the royalty of Europe" (Rosenbaum 61). When high-society Jews married non-Jews, these unions were publicized in reputable Anglo-Jewish weeklies. Assuredly, Wolf would have been familiar with the marriage of Marie Heine, "a princess of Hebrew birth," who married the Prince of Monaco in 1889, which was reported in the

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[27] "Cupid Conquers," The Cincinnati Enquirer (30 May 1878), Small Collections 13082, American Jewish Archives as cited in Anne Rose. Beloved Strangers: Interfaith Families in America (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 234 n136.

[28] Anne Rose reports in Beloved Strangers (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) that "Over the years, the [American] Israelite [the Cincinnati-based publication of Rabbi Wise's Reform Movement], "took various views of high-society interfaith weddings, sometimes condemning them as lamentable, but alternately casting them as evidence of Jewish success" (234 n136).

[29] Grey Brechin relates in Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 2006) that an article in the San Francisco Chronicle under the ironic headline, "The Course of True Love," published on 17 Oct. 1869, lampooned the "disastrous aftermath of a marriage between a prominent [Christian] mining engineer and the [Jewish] daughter of wheat king Isaac Friedlander" (173).

American Israelite and the New York Jewish Chronicle.[30] It would seem incredible for Emma Wolf not to have either read or heard about this affair which occurred just three years in advance of Other Things Being Equal.

Emma Wolf converts her personal and public knowledge of interfaith matrimony into an unusual fictional format. My contention is that in modeling Ruth Levice on Helen Wise and Alice Wolf, Wolf emboldens her stand on intermarriage by placing a Jewish woman instead of a Jewish man as the religious transgressor. Other Things Being Equal is among the first Jewish-American novels written by a Jewish-American woman to represent a Jewish woman's abridgement of the social and religious proscription against interfaith marriage. In relying on the actions of Jewish women drawn from real life experiences, Wolf's novel privileges the autonomy of a Jewish woman to determine her own matrimonial destiny, even when her choice defies the expectations of both Jewish and American society.

Wolf must have drawn upon real as well as fictional sources in crafting her heroine, Ruth Levice. Just as Wolf turned to actual women upon which to model her protagonist, Wolf found inspiration in the dramatic and biblical tales of women who challenged gender, religious, and social conventions in the Merchant of Venice and the Book of Ruth.

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[30] The sensationalized reporting of Marie Heine's marriage to the Prince of Monaco in 1889 occurred just three years prior to the publication of Other Things Being Equal, and Wolf also might have read about Heine's well-publicized marriage. Anne Rose, Beloved Strangers: Interfaith Families in America (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 234 n136.

2.7 Intermarriage: Jewish Prohibition and American Censure

Throughout the Old Testament, the gender bias against foreign wives prevails, and rarely does the prohibition against exogamous marriage focus on women.[31] Other Things Being Equal takes an unusual step in reversing Biblical tradition by delineating the story of a Jewish woman who chooses to marry a non-Jewish man. In rescinding the normative biblical model of the woman as a figure of temptation, Wolf reverses Jewish and American history.

From Biblical times to the twenty-first century, exogamous marriage was perceived as a threat to the survival of Jews. Historically, Jews experienced low birth-rates and intermarriage proportionately jeopardized a small ethno-religious community whose numbers were already diminutive. Historian Henry Feingold explains that assimilative angst has been present in America since the Colonial period when intermarriage "made such deep inroads that only the timely arrival of German Jews assured the continuation of American Jewry" (Zion 305). Apprehension about the sustainability of a Jewish presence in America is especially cogent in the fictionalized nuclear family of Jules and Esther Levice, who are representative of the national trend among Jewish families of the era. On the one hand, a rising rate in Jewish intermarriage in America presumes increasing acceptance of Jews as national prejudice against Jews declines. On the other hand, increased intermarriage threatens Jewish survival as children not raised as Jews do not perpetuate Jewish religious and cultural practices. What was

[31] The exception occurs in Ezra 10.12, where there is a concern for intermarriage for both genders, which is unusual because "most [biblical] texts emphasize the danger of foreign wives rather than husbands." Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., Jewish Study Bible (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999)1685.

regarded for many generations as the slippery slope of intermarriage, culminating in cultural and religious deracination, may be, according to Henry Feingold, not so much a statistical battle for Jewish survival as a "question of how much in-marriage a particular subgroup can abide before an irreversible trend toward cultural dilution, which in turn generates more intermarriage, is set in motion" (Zion 306)

As historians, demographers and sociologists have discovered, it is nearly impossible to quantify the rate of attrition in the American Jewish population through intermarriage because US population surveys do not monitor religious affiliations, nor do individual states, with the exceptions of Iowa and Indiana, require a declaration of religion (Feingold, Zion 305). Historians of the Far West confirm that the Jews in California, as elsewhere in the United States in the nineteenth century, were reluctant to intermarry. Fred and Harriet Rochlin's study, Pioneer Jews: A New Life in the Far West, states that "Although intermarriage did occur, most western Jewish settlers avoided mixed unions. . . . Even on the newly opened frontier, where women of any kind were scarce, the majority of Jewish settlers chose to marry within their faith" (90). Similarly, William Toll, in "Intermarriage in the Urban West," concludes that Jews in the western sections of the country in the nineteenth century did not intermarry with any greater frequency than Jews elsewhere"(165). In the East, Jacob Markus Rader reports similar findings. In United States Jewry 1776-1985, Rader reports that less than 1% of Jews on New York's Lower East side intermarried at the turn of the nineteenth century (400). One of the earliest surveys of intermarriage, Jules Drashsler's Democracy and Assimilation, surveyed 100,000 marriage licenses in New York City between 1902 and 1908, and

"found that of all white groups Jews were the least likely to marry outsiders" (Sklare 235).

By the closing decade of the nineteenth century, when Ruth Levice in Other Things Being Equal weds Dr. Herbert Kemp, there were neither halachic provisions nor Jewish reforms to sanction intermarriage. The rabbinic debate on intermarriage became particularly vociferous as Orthodox immigrant rabbis and American-Reform rabbis envisioned the adaptation and survival of Judaism in the United States from divergent perspectives.

The publication of Other Things Being Equal actually coincided with the 1892 Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the professional organization of Reform clergy, founded in 1889. In an historic reform, the CCAR had previously "voted to recognize women's equality in the synagogue" (Rose 70). Although men and women were no longer segregated in Reform congregations, the reality for Emma Wolf was that, in her own synagogue, women were not allowed to join the temple membership in their own right.[32] Not until 1921 did San Francisco's Rabbi Martin Meyer of Temple Emanu-El succeed "in winning for them [women] [membership] privileges at temple" (Rosenbaum 12). When reforms regarding mixed-gender seating in synagogue pews and the viability of female temple membership were arenas for disputation, the much more

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[32] Elkan Cohn, rabbi of Temple Emanu-El from 1860 to 1889, initiated many reforms. In 1861, Rabbi Cohn "allowed men and women to sit together. He chose a Sabbath sermon to justify the change, invoking a well-known verse from Deuteronomy: 'Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn. . . .' " Rabbi Cohn complained "that Judaism had far too long 'excluded women from...many privileges to which they are justly entitled, but that the time had come when this evil ought to be remedied.' " Qtd. in Fred Rosenbaum, Visions of Reform (Berkeley: Judah Magnus, 2000) 46.

divisive issues relating to intermarriage were postponed by the CCAR. until 1909.[33] Seventeen years would elapse between the first edition of Other Things Being Equal in 1892 and a sanctioned debate on intermarriage at the 1909 meeting of the CCAR. The suspenseful, but ultimately anticlimactic, debate recounted in Beloved Strangers describes how Rabbi Isaac Moses began the tense [CCAR] session with a joke. Rabbi Moses asked the assembled rabbis, "'What do you think will happen if the rabbi refuses to marry such a couple of Jew and non-Jew?'" Another rabbi called from the floor, "'They will go to another rabbi'" (Rose 129). Rose relates that the long-anticipated discussion ended quickly after a surprising motion was made to close the debate. The juxtaposition between religious conviction and social necessity at the 1909 CCAR meeting reflected the reality of Jewish-American life. Further dialogue by the CCAR on the intermarriage question remained mute until 1935. The lack of resolution on matters pertaining to intermarriage was perhaps an outgrowth of the tension between the American inclination toward independent decision-making, especially in matters of the heart, and the Jewish desire for solidarity and affirmation as a sustainable minority.

The inability of the CCAR to accommodate interfaith marriage replicated the predicament represented in Other Things Being Equal. The Conference sought to locate a means of upholding halachic prescriptions and adjusting Jewish practice to the social realities of American life, but the failure to mediate these oppositions ironically led the CCAR in 1909 to forbid "intermarriage at the same time that they devised policies to

[33] In 1907 the CCAR agreed to a formal debate at its 1909 meeting on issues pertaining to rabbinic officiating at interfaith weddings, the conversion protocols for the non-Jewish spouse, and the religious affiliation of children.

accommodate mixed couples" (Rose 128). When Dr. Kemp marries Ruth Levice in a civil ceremony, the religious objections to interfaith marriage in the absence of conversion had not been removed. In Other Things Being Equal, Emma Wolf prescribes a separate-but-equal remedy in which mixed faith couples retain their individual religious identities without the necessity of conversion, a practice that typified the late twentieth-century rather than the late nineteenth-century.

2.8 A Marriage of Differences

Emma Wolf's idealistic and romantic nature most likely found the controversial subject of intermarriage irresistible. The gender and religious controversies that enveloped the matrimonial debate undoubtedly appealed to Wolf's social consciousness. It would have been easy to sensationalize the events depicted in Other Things Being Equal because interfaith marriages, especially among Jews, were almost as uncommon as they were unpopular in 1892. Desisting from transcribing a torrid tale of illicit romance, Wolf enjoins the intermarriage controversy as an opportunity to exercise her desire for social change and to sanction a woman's right to self-determination. Certainly, Wolf was attracted to the love story between a Christian and a Jew, with its aura of forbidden courtship. It is equally probable that as a twenty-seven-years-old, unmarried woman, Wolf was psychologically drawn to a story of star-crossed lovers. In writing Other Things Being Equal, Wolf could invest her heroine with liberties that were unavailable to her as a quasi-invalid. Intellectually, Wolf engaged the topic of intermarriage precisely because it created a platform for the interrogation of religious, gender and social issues. In scrutinizing these interconnected concerns, Wolf balanced her romanticism with

realism, a compromise that befits the resolution of Other Things Being Equal, where Ruth Levice intends to hold onto her Judaism as she embraces her Christian husband. In her study of interfaith families in nineteenth-century America, Anne Rose suggests that "intermarriage was not just a matter of perverse instincts or errors in judgment. It was an understandable part of American freedom to aspire and love, and, more basically, to choose and change" (67). That Wolf was fully invested in her heroine's ability to "aspire and love, choose and change" is attested to by the rigor of the argument Ruth wages with her father over her choice to select her husband and fashion her destiny. In scrutinizing these subjects, Other Things Being Equal navigates the entire battleground of Jewish resistance to intermarriage. In waging a protracted rhetorical war with her father, Ruth fights for female autonomy as well as religious tolerance.

"I can never bring myself to approve of a marriage between you [Ruth] and a Christian" (OTBE 185), Jules Levice tells his only daughter. At heart, Jules Levice equates intermarriage with the rejection of Judaism. To Ruth's aggrieved father, what Dr. Kemp proposes is not marriage, but apostasy. In his opposition to intermarriage, Jules Levice represents the prevailing opinion of the times. For the majority of Jews, not just Jules Levice, intermarriage was viewed as a form of self-destruction. Wolf was familiar with the Yiddish word, *mesumad*, and uses it in Heirs of Yesterday as a curse against a Jewish man who renounces his Judaism. Although Ruth never proposes conversion, Jules Levice interprets her prospective betrothal to a Christian as a form of religious repudiation. Maurice Samuel, an authority on Yiddish culture, explains that

> Perhaps the heaviest and deadliest Yiddish word is *shmad*, deriving from the Hebrew for "destruction, wiping out," and having the single meaning of "apostasy, conversion from Judaism to another religion." *Zikh shmadn* is "to apostatize," and a man who has done that is a *meshumad*, which etymologically would be "destroyed one," but as used in living Yiddish implies something more hateful than "self-destruction." The emotional charge in the word did not spring solely from religious intolerance. Mixed with it was the rage of an embattled minority made more of a minority with every defection. . . . (Samuel 215)

Jules Levice understands intermarriage within the framework of the *meshumad*, the Jew who destroys Judaism through intermarriage. Entirely perplexed, Jules Levice questions Ruth, asking her how she can remain a Jew when she is married to a Christian. Although Ruth has explained that she has no intention of either renouncing Judaism or converting to Christianity, Jules Levice assumes that a wife's identity is determined by the religious affiliation and social standing of her husband. In her father's eyes, Ruth's offense carries social as well as personal consequences. By marrying outside the faith, Ruth diminishes the already shrinking Jewish minority. In Jules Levice's judgment, intermarriage is an enigma. He cannot decipher how Ruth can retain her Jewish identity if she marries a Christian. Trying to fathom this conundrum, Jules says, "You have just said, my Ruth, that you would not renounce your religion. How could that be when you have a Christian husband who would not renounce his?" (OTBE 194). Jules Levice is perplexed; if Herbert Kemp remains a Christian, how can his wife call herself a Jew? In Jules Levice's

mind, Ruth's Judaism is contingent upon her husband's conversion. The remedy that Emma Wolf projects in Other Things Being Equal is so extraordinary in the experience of Jewish families that Jules Levice cannot comprehend the compromise that his daughter proposes, a marriage wherein neither partner converts nor relinquishes their own religious convictions. Ruth does not need to forfeit her identity as Jew to become the wife of a Christian. Evidently, Wolf propounds that Ruth's American liberty to choose co-exists with her Jewish beliefs.

Ruth reassures her father that her identification with and commitment to Judaism remains firm. She pledges "As for my religion, I am a Jewess and will die one. My God is fixed and unalterable; He is one and indivisible; to divide His divinity would be to deny His omnipotence" (OTBE 194). Despite this testament of faith, Jules Levice is not persuaded that Ruth will maintain her Judaism if she marries a Christian.

Ruth Levice, who has been tutored by her father and reared under his influence, has obviously modeled herself on his liberal and independent thinking. More pointedly, Ruth counters her father's objections by reminding him that their family are Reform Jews, suggesting that Judaism has been reshaped by the freedoms of American circumstance. As Jules Levice listens to his daughter's defense of intermarriage, Ruth explains that Reform Judaism in its adaptation to American circumstances has become less rigidly prescriptive and more tolerant of change. She reminds her father that she will uphold those commandments that have guided her practice in the past, but she is selective in the rituals she chooses to maintain. Ruth tries to ease her father's misgivings by suggesting

> "As to forms, you, father, have bred in me contempt for all but a few. Saturday will always be my Sabbath, no matter what convention would make me do. We have decided that writing or sewing or pleasuring, since it hurts no one, is no more a sin on that day than on another; to sit with idle hands and gossip or slander is more so. But on that day my heart always holds its Sabbath. . . . On our New Year I should still feel that a holy cycle of time had passed; but I live according to only one record of time, and my New Year falls always on the first of January. Atonement is a sacred day to me; I could not desecrate it. Our services are magnificently beautiful, and I should feel like a culprit if debarred from their holiness. . . . After these, father, wherein does our religion show itself?"(OTBE 194-95)

By delineating her continued attachment to the practices of Reform Judaism, Ruth details the adaptations that Judaism has undertaken as a consequence of American liberties. Ruth implies that as a Reform Jew, it is possible, other things being equal, to live as much as an American as a Jew. By marrying a Christian, Ruth envisions the same accommodation between her faith and her marriage as she experiences between her faith and her country. Ruth suggests that her Reform practices are aligned with her American privileges; consequently, her marital choices should not be curtailed by religious practices that have already adapted to American circumstances.

Unconvinced that the retention of separate religious identities can secure a happy union, Jules Levice contends that religious differences create dissension, especially when a married couple cannot share the same beliefs and celebrate the same holidays. In response to her father's continued objections, Ruth professes the ultimate heresy, proclaiming ". . . I may call myself a christian, though I spell it with a small letter" (OTBE 196-97). Ruth explains that she feels that in accepting Christianity as a religion of "Love in the highest—perfect love, though warm and human," she describes herself as an adherent to Christian principles (OTBE 196). The endorsement of Ruth's humanistic creed is affirmed by the novel's epigraph, which is taken from the New Testament. The epigram proclaims "And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love" (1Cor.13:13, New Oxford Bible, 286). Ruth's Judeo-Christian ethic reconciles Christ's teaching of brotherly love with the Covenant given to Moses. Dr. Herbert Kemp also tries to reconcile Judaism and Christianity by suggesting that "Our faiths aren't widely divergent. We are both quite liberal; otherwise marriage between us might be a grave experiment"(OTBE 195).

Ruth's intention is to minimize the differences that divide Christians and Jews by locating beliefs that enrich each religion. In this sense, Ruth endorses the message of Christianity without adopting its practices. In advancing these claims, Ruth goes well beyond the changes called for by Reform rabbis at the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. The rabbis sanctioned changes that were aligned with the views and habits of modern civilization, but only the most radical reformers advocated a rapprochement between

Christianity and Judaism.[34] As readers anticipate, Ruth's self-identification as a "christian" does little to advance her cause. Illustrating points of congruence between Judaism and Christianity furthers Wolf's inclusive agenda, but it does not assuage Jules Levice's fears about the erasure of Judaism through intermarriage.

The paradoxical terms of the intermarriage dispute unfold as Jules Levice argues that Ruth will forfeit her attachment to Judaism if she marries a Christian. However, he also declares that Ruth bears in her blood an eradicable mark of her Jewish birth. Jules Levice's indecision regarding the self-definition of Jews as a race, religion, or culture was typical of the late-nineteenth century's efforts to reconfigure Jewish identity under American circumstances. Jews struggled to maintain their difference as a religious and racial minority while negotiating their identity as Jews within American society. Desiring to retain their distinctiveness, Jews referred to themselves not only by their shared religious convictions but also by a shared biology. Sociologist Eric Goldstein contends in The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity that "the realignment of Jews from a distinct racialized entity to the 'whiteness' of native-born Americans" was a mid-twentieth century-transaction which "sat uneasily with many central aspects of Jewish identity" (3). In "Between Race & Culture: Jewish Women and Self-Definition in Late Nineteenth Century America," Eric Goldstein again proposes that when Jews invoked racial difference, it was used differentially, depending on social pressures and circumstances. Goldstein explains that some Jews used race

[34] Rabbi Krauskopf of Philadelphia was among the second generation of radical reformers. Krauskopf called for "a rapprochement between Judaism and Christianity, and the reestablishment of a primitive religion embracing Jesus along with Moses and other prophets." Most Reform rabbis felt that Krauskopf had gone "too far" in his call for Christian and Jewish synthesis. Fred Rosenbaum Visions of Reform (Berkeley: Judah Magnus Museum, 2000) 84.

> to warn that Jews should guard against excessive social contact with Gentiles, lest they intermarry and lose what were considered special hereditary endowments. Others mustered it [race] to express a continued attachment to Jewishness even when all outward signs of social and religious affiliation had receded. ("Race and Culture"184)

At the time Emma Wolf composed her "Jewish novels," the institutional and communal sanction of a racialized classification was not only common parlance but a preferred appellation by many of America's Jews. Isaac Mayer Wise tried to alter the vernacular by changing the national discourse by referring to Jews as a religion rather than as a race, but among the majority of late nineteenth-century "Hebrews," the racial identification persisted.[35]

If Jules Levice envisions Judaism as a faith adopted by choice, then his daughter may elect to convert or abandon her Jewish beliefs. However, if Judaism is defined in racial terms, then it becomes a part of Ruth's inherited and indelible identity. Undoubtedly, Jules Levice finds solace in his assertion that Jewishness is "in the blood" (OTBE 192). Ruth's father unleashes a race-based argument to forestall the marriage between Ruth and Herbert. Jules argues that Judaism is more than a religion; it has a racial legacy. He pleads with his daughter, urging her to ". . . think of the great difference between the Jewish race and traditions, and the Christian" (OTBE 184). Even though he

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[35] Eric Goldstein relates that in 1899 the Bureau of Immigration's Commissioner, Terrence V. Powderly, classified Jews by race as "Hebrews" and the identification was still religiously and socially acceptable. When Washington, D C attorney Simon Wolf [no relation to Emma Wolf] tried to abolish the racial categorization of the Jews by the Bureau of Immigration as "Hebrews" in 1903, arguing that Jews had been singled out as the only religious sect registered in the immigration records, Jewish leaders failed to support Wolf's efforts, preferring to sustain the racial identification. The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity (Princeton: Princeton UP 2006) 184.

is not Orthodox in his practice of Judaism, Levice insists that "I am intensely Jewish" (OTBE 192). Jewishness is genetic. In an ironic encounter, Jules Levice lectures the physician, Dr. Kemp, about Jewish blood. Levice concedes that "As you say. . . we are not orthodox, but before we become orthodox or reformed, we are born, and being born, we are invested with certain hereditary traits that are unconvertible. Every Jew bears in his blood the glory, the triumph, the misery, the abjectness of Israel" (OTBE 192). Although Levice might have aligned his racial argument with the Jewish religious tenet that favors matrilineal descent, Levice does not pursue the halachic implications, largely because his religious beliefs "are not orthodox"(192). Jules Levice's racial argument fails to dissuade Ruth because, in an era when Jewish women were refashioning both their religious and social rights, a biologically determined identity would curtail her freedom to define her destiny.

Whereas the religious and racial obstacles to nineteenth-century interfaith marriage may have been formidable, the most transgressive aspect of the proposed union of a Jewish woman and a Christian man involves the contravention of both Jewish and American gender norms. Other Things Being Equal violates social expectations by its gender-breaking defiance of Jewish marital customs. Typically, in cases of exogamous marriage, Jewish men were more likely to marry non-Jewish women than Jewish women were to wed non-Jewish men. Although statistical data for the 1890s are unavailable, Marshall Sklare in Observing America's Jews affirms "the well–known fact that considerably more Jewish men intermarry than do Jewish women" (Sklare 108-9). Henry Feingold also confirms anecdotal observations, noting that that when Jewish men marry

outside the faith, they generally expect their non-Jewish spouses to convert (Zion 306). Other Things Being Equal shatters these gendered practices and expectations.

Ruth Levice is an unlikely feminist because she embraces opposing models of nineteenth-century femininity, fluctuating throughout the novel between conventional and progressive postures. The changing paradigms were frequently encapsulated by the Jewish and secular press of the 1890s. In a retrospective article entitled "The American Jewess," Rosa Sonneschein subdivides her observations into two sections; "The Jewess of Yesterday" and "The Jewess of To-Day." Similarly, Jenny Kleeberg Herz's "Daughters of Columbia" in the October, 1892, issue of the Menorah Journal synchronously endorses change and continuity. Consequently, Ruth's splintered feminism, captured in Other Things Being Equal, imparts a realistic rather than heroic image of a Jewish-American woman of the 1890s. Like many of the other Jewish women of her era, Ruth Levice discovers that the liberties of American life, as well as the aspirations to serve a wider community, are at odds with the traditionally ascribed role of Jewish women as the domesticated preservers of the Jewish culture. Like other white, middle-class women, Ruth Levice bears a strong resemblance to the True Woman who was amply endowed with the conventional pieties, particularly, virtue and wholesomeness. Traditionally, Jewish women were similarly represented as the residential guardians of Judaism. Given the Jewish woman's religious virtue, she exerted a strong moral influence on her household, where Judaism was nurtured and preserved. Jewish men, on the other hand, were accustomed to greater contact with non-Jews

because their business interests, political activities, and social connections took them well beyond the perimeters of the Jewish home and Jewish community.

In most instances, women in San Francisco's upper-class Jewish society who were associated with the wealth and privilege of the city's elite Golden Circle did not work outside the home. Their professional and political opportunities were minimal, and many turned to philanthropic service because it was one of the "few public domains in which middle-class Jewish women could work" (Lichtenstein, Writing 77). The growing number of charitable Jewish organizations, such as the seminal National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), founded in 1893, provided nascent opportunities for Pacific Heights residents like the fictional Ruth Levice to reach beyond domesticity.

Similarly, Dr. Herbert Kemp introduces Ruth Levice to a wider world of public service. She visits Kemp's patients, especially an "orphan lad" and a "contaminated" woman (OTBE 121). Once Ruth is acquainted with the special circumstances of Dr. Kemp's disadvantaged patients, she finds independent satisfaction in fulfilling the needs of others. The gratitude she receives from the orphaned gardener-lad, Bob Bard, inspires Ruth's independence. The narrator relates the life-altering effect that Ruth's charitable administrations have upon her as she leaves the bedside of the convalescing lad:

> Ruth went out enveloped in that look of gratitude. It was the most spontaneous expression of warm gratitude she had ever received, and as she walked down the steep hill, she longed to be doing something really helpful to the many Bobs. Social service was still in its infancy, unorganized, spasmodic, individual, still groping its way through rigid

> sectarianism, into a Fruit and Flower Mission here, a Pioneer Kindergarten there. Besides, Ruth had led, on the whole, so far, an egoistic life (103).[36]

In order to continue her humanitarian work, Ruth traverses San Francisco neighborhoods on her own to dispense care to the needy. While enjoying her small liberty, Ruth also discovers, in her charitable service, a release from the incessant round of inbred socializing among the Gilded Circle whose religious homogeneity functioned as an effective fortification against intermarriage. Undoubtedly, Ruth falls in love with Herbert Kemp for many reasons, but as Anne Rose bluntly observes, "Ruth is attracted to Kemp because he gives her something to do" (71). Given Ruth's nascent desire to extend her public service beyond the Jewish home and Jewish community, it is unlikely that the traditional Jewish marriage promoted by her parents to her cousin, Louis Arnold, will provide Ruth with a sense of self-determination and self-satisfaction that accompanies her prospective union with Herbert Kemp. Ruth realizes what many other Jewish women were also experiencing, that American opportunities expanded their Jewish lives. The founder of the National Council for Jewish Women, Hannah Greenbaum Solomon, could have been speaking about Ruth Levice when she reflected on the experiences of Jewish-American women. In her memoir, Solomon recollected being informed that a "woman's place is in the home, they told us. The last thirty years [1890-1930] have been devoted to proof of our boast that woman's sphere is the whole, wide world, without limits" (McCune 1).

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[36] The Fruit and Flower Mission was a charity that brought fruit and flowers to female factory workers in order to lift their spirits.

As Ruth Levice's social world expands, Jules Levice repositions his objections to confront social realities. Ruth's father, who is genuinely concerned about his daughter's future happiness, foresees social censure as yet another impediment to the couple's happiness. Corresponding with Dr. Kemp, Jules inquires, "Have you considered that you are a Christian; that she [my daughter] is a Jewess?" (OTBE 90). Kemp counters that in permitting Ruth to freely mingle with Christians, didn't Levice anticipate that Ruth could love and be loved by a Christian? Levice taught his daughter to regard her Jewish and Christian friends with equanimity, but what he agreed to in principle, he cannot condone in practice. For Jules Levice, the social obstacles from Christian and Jewish perspectives are insurmountable. Kemp idealistically dismisses worldly approbation as "valueless" (194). Kemp concedes to Ruth's father that the world may be narrow-minded, but he asserts that "individuals are broader" (193). Perhaps Dr. Kemp has forgotten his own erstwhile statement.

Confronting a myriad of objections from higher divorce rates among exogamous couples to the complicated decisions about the faith of the couple's children, Kemp finally asks Ruth's father, "Will you give your daughter?" and Jules Levice answers, "No, sir; I will not"(199). Sorrowfully, Levice tells Ruth, "I cannot honestly give you to him, [but] I shall not keep you from him. My child, the door is open; you can pass through without my hand" (200). Why doesn't Ruth pass through the open door?

To understand the seeming martyrdom of Ruth's self-abnegating decision, Wolf aligns the grief-stricken fathers, Shylock in the Merchant of Venice and Jephthah in the

Old Testament's Book of Judges with Jules Levice.[37] In her self-sacrifice and loyalty, Ruth reenacts the tribulations of her biblical namesake.[38] Despite Ruth's "desire" and her "wish" to marry Kemp, she cannot live with the pain her marriage would cause her parents, especially her adored father. Like her biblical prototype, Ruth remains loyal to her parents, even if this decision entails sacrificing her happiness. Ruth writes to Kemp, "I could never be happy with you. Do you remember Shylock—the old man who withdrew from the merry making with a breaking heart? I could not make myself merry while he wept; my heart would also weep. You see how selfish I am; I am doing it for my own sake and no one else's" (OTBE 207). In rejecting Kemp's proposal, Ruth distances herself from Jessica, Shylock's daughter, who elopes with Lorenzo, a Christian. For Ruth, the elopement is especially heinous because Jessica repudiates her father and her faith. There is no doubt that Ruth's attachment to her father dictates her decision to forego her happiness. Ruth discussed Edwin Booth's performance in the role of Shylock with her cousin when she returned from the theatre. Ruth confided, "I wasn't ashamed of Shylock; if his vengeance was distorted, the cause distorted it. But, oh, Louis, the misery of that poor old man! After all, his punishment was as fiendish as his guilt. . . . Poor old, lonely Shylock! With all his intellect, how could he regret that wretched little Jessica?"

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[37] Emma Wolf was not the only person to link the story of Jephthah with The Merchant of Venice. Michelle Ephraim in "Jephthah's Kin: The Sacrificing Father in the *Merchant of Venice*," Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies, 5.2 (2005):72, confirms that Shakespeare was acquainted with the Old Testament story of Jephthah. Ephraim argues that "Although Shakespeare does not explicitly refer to Judges 11 in *Merchant*, his allusions to Jephthah's vow and sacrifice in 3 *Henry IV* and *Hamlet* make clear his familiarity with this provocative story" (72).

[38] Robert Gordis describes the etymology for Ruth's name as "possibly an elision of *re'uth* (with an 'ayin), which is the orthography in the Peshita, the Syriac version of the Bible. The root, *resh ayin yod*, which is common in Aramaic and Syriac and its cognate to the Hebrew *razah* (with a *s'ade*), means 'to wish, desire.'" Personal Names in Ruth—a Note on Biblical Etymologies," Judaism 35. 3 (1986): 299.

(OTBE 123). Louis answers Ruth's question with the obvious observation, "He [Shylock] was a Jewish father" (OTBE 123). Rather than injure her father, Ruth rejects her lover, believing that her happiness with Kemp would be jeopardized by the sorrow and guilt she would experience in contravening her father's wishes. In turn, her father's unhappiness would alienate her from her husband. Dissuaded from marrying Kemp by her loyalty to her father and her self-abnegating preference to be the victim of unhappiness rather than the cause of it, Ruth refuses Kemp's proposal. By her decision, Ruth believes she has safeguarded her father from suffering.

Ruth sends a note to Kemp, attempting to explain her refusal of his marriage proposal. She writes, "I am no Jephthah's daughter—he [Jules Levice] wants no sacrifice and I make none. Duty, the hardest word, to learn is not leading me" (207). Why doesn't Ruth follow her heart and fashion her own destiny? The audacious intent of Wolf's novel appears to collapse with Ruth's refusal unless readers are mindful of her symbolic kinship with biblical and literary progenitors.

In the Biblical story recounted in Judges 11, Jephthah promises the Lord, "If YOU deliver the Ammonites [Jephthah's enemies] into my hands," then Jephthah will agree to sacrifice as a burnt offering to the lord "whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me on my safe return from the Ammonites" (Judges 11:1.30-31, Jewish Study Bible). By this vow, Jephthah is bound to sacrifice his only daughter, who has run outside to greet him. Prior to her sacrifice, Jephthah's daughter laments her fate and "bewails(s) her maidenhood" for "She had never known a man" (Judges 11:1.37-39,

Jewish Study Bible 538). Jephthah daughter's obedience results in her father's dreadful sacrifice of his beloved child as an act of faith.

Like her biblical kinswomen, Ruth Levice chooses to sustain her integrity by upholding the virtues of loyalty and companionship at the expense of her own happiness. When Ruth Levice rejects Herbert Kemp's marriage proposal, she reassures her father that she is no Jephthah's daughter" (OTBE 207), who readily sacrifices her autonomy in deference to patriarchal authority. For readers of Other Things Being Equal, Ruth's abject misery undermines the authenticity of her assurance. Initially, Wolf casts Jules Levice in the typological role as God's obedient servant, inexorably sacrificing his only child's happiness to secure her Judaism and demonstrate his faith. Reflecting upon the suffering he has caused, Jules Levice retracts his objections. Unlike Jephthah, Jules Levice does not possess the principled certainty to metaphorically sacrifice Ruth's life and happiness. His soul searching leads him to the perception that because he could not jettison "the old prejudices, the old superstitions, the old narrowness of traditions" (251), he has forfeited his daughter's happiness. On his deathbed, with the newlyweds, Ruth and Herbert, standing before him, the Jewish patriarch utters the ancient Jewish blessing

> "The Lord bless thee and keep thee,
>
> "The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee,
>
> "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."
>
> (OTBE 259)

The demise of the family patriarch does not mark the annihilation of Ruth's Jewish identity. Ruth's actions in marrying a Christian are not rebellious but revisionist. Ruth is

not interested in replicating the past, if she were, she would have married her cousin Louis Arnold. Instead Ruth weds a person who encourages her autonomy and motivates her to move beyond the boundaries that have restricted her life.

2.9 Conclusion: Love Jewish-American Style

In the 1890s, when women's lives were constrained by contrary models of femininity, one prescribed by Jewish expectations and another ordained by vacillating ideals of American womanhood, Wolf's novel offers a prescription for change. When Ruth Levice marries a Christian, she contravenes Jewish law and Jewish norms, yet Ruth makes it clear that her marriage will not undermine her Jewish faith or diminish her Jewish identity. In her decision to marry outside her faith, Ruth privileges the American values of individualism and personal happiness but does not cast off her Jewish beliefs to fulfill her American destiny. In this sense, Ruth resists the assimilative impulses of the 1890s, and insists on the equality of her dual birthright as a Jewish American. Fortunately, Ruth does not have to choose between her Jewish faith and her personal happiness; instead, she redefines and separates her interlocking but distinct identities as a woman, as a Jew, and as an American. Ruth identifies herself not only as a Jewish woman but as an American woman. In negotiating the incongruities of Jewish-American life, Ruth mediates the oppositions that destabilize her identity. The resolution to her conflicting religious, gender, and family loyalties are located in separating these equal claims on her identity. In Other Things Being Equal, Ruth Levice is not positioned to choose between these opposing claims. She will marry Herbert Kemp without compromising either her faith or her new-found autonomy. Admittedly, conventional

constraints still tug at Ruth Levice, but in the end she emerges more victor than victim. As Wolf envisions her protagonist's prerogatives, each of Ruth's multiple allegiances can be enacted independently. Wolf enfranchises her heroine by granting her the liberty to fulfill each of her roles as a daughter, as a Jew, as a woman, and as a wife in separate but equally actualized spheres. Ruth Levice's varied allegiances are wedded to the contention that, other things being equal, a Jewish woman in American can exercise multiple identities without compromising her principles or her subverting her individuality.

When Wolf addresses the controversial issues that underlie the Rest Cure and the opposition to interfaith marriage, she gently undermines conventional attitudes. A close reading of Other Things Being Equal suggests that Wolf's iconoclasm was more tempered than actively programmatic. In this vein, Israel Zangwill identified "thoughtfulness" as the quality that made Emma Wolf's fiction "luminous and arrestive [sic] amid the thousand and one tales of our over-productive age" (Zangwill," New Novelist" 19).Wolf resists the compunction among the minorities of her era to erase differences. Contesting prevailing social and religious conventions, Other Things Being Equal advocates that Jewish women assert their own choices in marriage and affirm their differences as women and as Jews. Emma Wolf is among the first Jewish-American writers to place a Jewish-American woman in this heretical predicament. In an age when few novelists, and even fewer Jewish-American women writers, addressed the controversial issue of intermarriage, Wolf demonstrated intellectual courage in confronting what were considered in the nineteenth-century irreconcilable differences. Emma Wolf was as much a romanticist as she was a realist. She knew the choices

available to women in 1892 were limited. But as women in the 1890s sought more meaningful lives, Emma Wolf adds one more liberty to the growing list of their enfranchisements, the right of a Jewish woman to love and to marry a man of another faith. In advancing this freedom, Wolf understood that, other things being equal, interfaith marriage validates rather than eclipses individual differences.

Chapter 3: Heirs of Yesterday: Jewish Pride and American Prejudice

3.1. Mentoring the Manuscript

Philip May a Jewish physician in Emma Wolf's Heirs of Yesterday (1900) pompously pronounces, "I have discovered that to be a Jew is to be handicapped for life."[1] Between the wedded harmony of Jew and Gentile in Other Things Being Equal and the ethnic denial of Heirs of Yesterday, Emma Wolf undergoes a phenomenological shift that is reflected in the troubling topics of her fourth novel. Wolf's decision to return to a deliberately Jewish story has its origins in a peculiar confluence of personal and national factors that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. In Heirs of Yesterday, Jewish-Americans reappraise their bifurcated identities as they reconfigure their connections to American nationality and Jewish tradition under the mounting pressure of anti-Semitism.

Two secular novels, Prodigal in Love (1894) and The Joy of Life (1896), intervened between Wolf's two overtly Jewish works, Other Things Being Equal (1892) and Heirs of Yesterday (1900). After the publication of her fourth novel, Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf never returned to a Jewish subject, either in her short fiction or in her last novel, Fulfillment: A California Romance (1916). Undoubtedly, ominous changes in the nation's social, economic and political climate renewed Wolf's interest in a Jewish topic, but it is not inconceivable that another source of inspiration came from Wolf's admiration for Israel Zangwill, Great Britain's most successful Anglo-Jewish writer, with

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[1] Emma Wolf, Heirs of Yesterday (Chicago: A. C. McClug, 1900) 35. All subsequent references to Heirs of Yesterday refer to this edition and will be abbreviated in the text as HY.

whom Wolf corresponded between December 1896 and December 1900. The Joy of Life had already been published when Wolf began writing to Zangwill, and she sent a copy to him that he subsequently reviewed in the Jewish Chronicle [London]. Tellingly, the chronology of the Heirs of Yesterday covers the period between February 27, 1897 and May 25, 1898, a time frame that coincides with the period of Wolf's epistolary connection to Israel Zangwill and her return to overtly Jewish concerns in Heirs of Yesterday.

In a letter written to Emma Wolf on February 5, 1897, Israel Zangwill asked his San Francisco protégé ". . .why not write the Jewish story which is stirring in your sub-conscious? Why not do it for your [American] Jewish Publication Society—they want native talent badly. . . .Of course not if that would cramp you. You must say exactly what you think about Jews & Judaism" (Cantalupo, "Letters"129).[2] Considering Zangwill's encouragement to "say exactly what you think about Jews" (129), he probably was unaware of Wolf's prior communication with JPS.[3] Wolf had previously submitted a manuscript to the Jewish Publication Society in 1894 when the organization itself was embroiled in an internal debate over the type of American Jewish fiction it wished to promote. According to historian Jonathan Sarna, who authored a centennial account of the Philadelphia-based organization, JPS's Publication Committee Report of February 28,

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[2] Qtd in Letter 2, page 129. Zangwill's correspondence with Wolf consists of 10 letters that appear in Barbara Cantalupo, "The Letters of Israel Zangwill to Emma Wolf: Transatlantic Mentoring in the 1890s." Resources for American Literary Study 28(2002) : 121-38. I am additionally indebted to Barbara Cantalupo for the publication information provided in "Emma Wolf's *Heirs of Yesterday* and the Jewish Community in San Francisco in the Late Nineteenth Century," Studies in Jewish American Literature 22 (2003):145-53.

[3] All subsequent references to the National Jewish Publication Society will be abbreviated in the text as JPS.

1894 states that "Back in 1894, a manuscript by the budding American Jewish novelist was rejected, despite favorable reports from some readers because "'some of the characters [are] immoral and the Rabbi hero impossible. . . . Whenever a traditional Jewish custom is discussed in the book, the Rabbi declares himself conscientiously unable to observe it.' "[4] Despite her reluctance to submit Heirs of Yesterday to JPS, Wolf apparently took Zangwill's advice seriously and, in writing Heirs of Yesterday, she returned to explicitly Jewish themes. Wolf solicits Zangwill's counsel as she progresses with her novel, but Wolf's ideas must be intuited from Zangwill's correspondence because Wolf's letters have not been located.[5]

In returning to a Jewish story, the West Coast writer once again confronted controversies that provoked contentious reactions from Jewish-Americans and indubitably disconcerted many Christian readers. In Heirs of Yesterday, Dr. Philip May unleashes a diatribe aimed at the burden imposed on him by his Jewish birth and professes that "Frankly . . . beyond the blood I was born with, pretty nearly all the Jew has been knocked out of me" (31). Even with Zangwill's influence at JPS where his enormously popular work Children of the Ghetto (1892) had been the organization's inaugural publication, Wolf was unlikely to submit Heirs of Yesterday for consideration to the Jewish Publication Society. Wolf knew that her novel would be too controversial

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[4] Publication Committee Minutes (February 28, 1894) 37 are quoted in Jonathan Sarna, JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 80.

[5] In a communication I had with Emma Wolf's grand-niece, Barbara Aaron of San Francisco, I was informed that Wolf's letters to Zangwill did not survive and that the entire archive of Wolf's communications with Israel Zangwill is represented by the ten letters in Barbara Aaron's private collection, (Barbara Aaron, e-mail to Dena Mandel, 28 Feb. 2008).

even with her mentor's intercession with JPS's editor, Judge Mayer Sulzberger, who was "on the lookout for a budding American Jewish literary giant—if not an 'American Israel Zangwill,' then at least someone who could write about 'our own time and country,' and make 'a welcome addition to our sadly deficient literature'" (Sarna, JPS 78). Barbara Cantalupo, who published Zangwill's ten known letters to Wolf, surmises that it was the novel's "Reform principles" which mirrored Wolf's own beliefs that "clearly affronted the Jewish Publication Society's board."[6]

Although no objectionable "Rabbi hero" appears in Heirs of Yesterday, the problem of presenting all Jews at all times in a good light remained, and in all probability not even Zangwill's influence could induce JPS to publish a novel in which an American-born, Harvard-education Jewish physician does all he can to distance himself from other Jews and disguise his Jewish birth. Undoubtedly, sectarian divisions as well as Jewish apostasy would be problematic for the Conservative base of the JPS and it is unlikely that the Philadelphia publishers would have found Heirs of Yesterday aligned with their literary objectives despite their previous interest in Wolf's fiction.[7] The Chicago-based firm of A. C. McClurg, the publishers of two of Wolf's previous novels, released Heirs of Yesterday in December 1900. Presumably, McClurg's was not wary of religious

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[6]Barbara Cantalupo, "Emma Wolf's *Heirs of Yesterday* and the Jewish Community in San Francisco in the Late Nineteenth Century," Studies in Jewish American Literature 22 (2003): 149.

[7]Zangwill may not have been aware that Wolf had also submitted a children's story to JPS around 1895. Sarna reports that in response to JPS' $1,000-prize competition for " 'the best story relating to a Jewish subject suited to young readers' " the organization received twenty-seven manuscripts. "The judges were deadlocked between two top submissions: one by the Jewish writer Emma Wolf, the other by the non-Jewish writer Louis Beauregard Pendleton. Since no consensus could be reached . . . the committee decided in October 1897 that it would award no prize at all." JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture (Philadelphia: JPS,1989) 86. In response to a subsequent E-mail inquiry, on 27 January 2008, Jonathan Sarna postulated that "One-eye, Two-eye Three-eye," which appeared in The American Jewess 2.6 (March 1896) might be the short story that Wolf submitted to JPS. Further inquiries with JPS are pending.

controversy because having formerly issued Other Things Being Equal they were prepared for Wolf's forthcoming confrontation with prejudice. Heirs of Yesterday addressed perturbing subjects that resulted from shifts in political, economic and social conditions that exacerbated anti-Semitism and compelled Jews in America to reframe the relationship between their national and cultural identities as the nineteenth century came to a close.

In his letter to Emma Wolf on December 12, 1900, Israel Zangwill alludes to the provocative elements in Wolf's recently published novel. In his congratulatory message, Zangwill confides that

> I have read 'Heirs of Yesterday' with much pleasure, not only on account of its art but its information. The exact place of the Jew in the 'Republic of human brotherhood' is a point that interests me exceedingly. Apparently it is not above the coloured folk. There is a great tragic-comic mine for you in the States, & you are sinking your shaft much deeper than in 'Other Things Being Equal.'(Cantalupo, "Letters"134)

Zangwill closes his laudatory letter with the encouraging remark that "I am hoping your book will be widely read by both Jews & Christians, as it cannot fail to stimulate both" (Cantalupo,"Letters"134). The anonymous reviewer of Heirs of Yesterday in the Jewish Messenger also pointed to the topicality of the themes presented in "Miss Wolf's New Story," allowing that "The story abounds in thoughts on current problems—the relation of Judaism to the age is made the subject of frequent dialogues" (1). Indeed, Heirs of Yesterday appeared at a time that was particularly disquieting for Jewish citizens who

had, despite periods of intolerance following the Civil War, enjoyed the liberties of American life. Wolf explores the disruptions at the turn of the century and unfolds a story that goes against not only the American grain, but contravenes normative Jewish behavior.

The complications that inhibit the mediation between American and Jewish identity in Heirs of Yesterday are alluded to in the novel's epigraph, which is excerpted from Israel Zangwill's Dreamers of the Ghetto (1898), a work of fictionalized Jewish biography. In this tribute to her mentor, Wolf signals her investment in their mutual concerns about the effect of assimilation and acculturation on Jewish continuity. Wolf selected a passage from Zangwill's opening chapter, "Child of the Ghetto," that points to the loss of connection to a shared past amid expanding opportunities of the present. The dichotomous attitudes that fragmented Jewish life amplify the epigraph's lamentation as a Jewish child of Venice's sixteenth-century ghetto unexpectedly encountering the secular world bemoans that ". . . something larger had come into life, a sense of a vaster universe without, and its spaciousness and strangeness filled his soul with a nameless trouble and a vague unrest. He was no longer a child of the Ghetto" (Zangwill, Dreamers 20). The oppositional constructs alluded to the epigraph are replicated in the opening scene of Heirs of Yesterday as celebration quickly turns to lamentation. Wolf's story begins on eve of the return of the novel's antagonist, Dr. Philip May, who has willfully discarded his Jewish inheritance.

In tracking the trajectory from the optimism of the interfaith relationships in Other Things Being Equal to the pessimism that accompanies marginalized Jewish identity in

Heirs of Yesterday, it is important to understand the social frameworks that would have influenced Wolf's thinking about ethnic particularity and assimilation. A synopsis of the plot in section **3.2 Plotting the Battle for Ethnic and American Identity** delineates the novel's binary impulses as Jews sought to affirm both ethnic particularity and American nationality in an era of heightened anti-Semitism.

This chapter provides a brief overview of two contemporaneous but contrastive social paradigms that mirror the opposition between Dr. Philip May and Jean Willard, the main figures in Heirs of Yesterday. The framework for celebration of ethnic particularism is derived from Horace Kallen's "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot." The assimilative model is derived from Israel Zangwill's play The Melting Pot.[8] The basic premises and conceptual metaphors that underlie both social theories are presented in section **3.3 Mixed Metaphors: Horace Kallen's Orchestra of Democracy vs. Israel Zangwill's Melting Pot.** These postulations on identity emerged as a response to the rising ant-Semitism. A brief overview of the historical circumstances that engendered American anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth century is outlined in section **3.4 Anti-Semitism in the 1890s.**

Dr. Philip May embodies the assimilative impulse and Jean Willard embraces Jewish particularity. Philip May's acculturative aspirations are closely aligned with Zangwill's Melting Pot and the progression of his Americanization is described in section **3.5 Philip May, an American with a Difference**. Jean Willard's advocacy for Jewish

[8] There is inconsistency in the spelling of the term melting pot; sometimes it is hyphenated and at other times, unhyphenated. I will retain the original spelling of the word as it appears in references and citations. In my own references to this term, I will use the unhyphenated form throughout the chapter.

continuity resembles the social philosophy promoted by Horace Kallen and her adherence to Jewish ethnicity is presented in part **3.6 Jean Willard, Jewish Warrior.** The opportunity to exercise American citizenship is provided by the historical circumstance of the Spanish–American War and the interplay between nationalism and ethnicity is described in section **3.7 Jewish Americans in the Spanish-American War.**

The indeterminacy of the novel's conclusion suggests that Wolf's characters could not enact the hoped for accommodation between ethnicity and nationalism that the prevailing models projected. The chapter's concluding segment, **3. 8. Jewish Americans and American Jews,** assesses the bipolarity of Jewish American identity that belies fulfillment in either the pluralistic or the assimilative paradigms. In a bold narrative move, Emma Wolf foregoes a happy resolution and affixes an uncertain ending to her tale of Jewish life in the American West.

3.2 Plotting the Battle for Ethnic and American Identity

The events of Heirs of Yesterday transpire between Dr. Philip May's return to his native San Francisco on February 27, 1897, and his departure on May 25, 1898. Joseph May, a German-Jewish immigrant and a successful San Francisco businessman, has been waiting for "fifteen years, three months, twenty-three and one-half days" (HY 22) for his only child's return to his native city. Joseph May, widowed when his son Philip was born, provided every advantage for his son, including an Eastern education, a Harvard medical degree, and an extended European tour, which was prolonged even further by Philip's attendance on his ailing Harvard companion, John Harleigh. In Boston, Philip "was thrown in with a crowd of young Bostonians—Harleigh was one of them—who, through

the fact that I [Philip] had been seen in a Unitarian church, took me for one of their own persuasion. It was a suggested evasion of an unfit shackle" (HY 33). On the first night of his return to San Francisco after his long absence, Philip May defends his deception to his bewildered father, explaining that there was no premeditation in this misrepresentation, nor was there any cause to correct it because "No doubt was ever evinced and no chance of an explanation ever offered itself. There was no need to drag in an uncongenial fact when the nature of our intimacy never called for one" (HY 33). Philip reinvents himself as a Unitarian—minus any genuine conversion—because, as he makes clear to his increasingly discomfited father, "Thanks to you I have been endowed with a name which tells no tales, thanks to my mother my features are equally silent?"(HY 33).

Philip actually owes his belated return to San Francisco to John Harleigh's uncle, Dr. Otis, who has named Philip to a vacated chair of clinical surgery, but Dr. Otis has no knowledge of Philip's Jewish origins. Philip feels it is in his best professional and social interests not to disabuse Dr. Otis of the misperception regarding his Jewish heritage. By the same token, Philip quickly corrects his father's expectations that he will join his father's or any other Jewish club. Philip reasons, "You see I should be making a move in the wrong direction were I to identify myself unnecessarily with any Jewish club, Jewish anything, or Jewish anybody" (HY 36). Gallingly, the newly returned prodigal son inquires of his disgusted parent, "Well, father . . . do you understand my stand?" (HY 37). Mimicking his father's Yiddish dialect, Philip asks his father, "Are you wid me or agin me?"(37). Joseph May is physically overcome with indignation and as his son, the doctor,

tries to minister to him. Joseph cries, "Let go—you—you—*mesumad* [criminal]!"(37).[9] With this curse, the long-awaited reunion ends and Dr. Philip May leaves his father's house for lodging at the Palace Hotel.

Joseph May is distressed by Philip's renunciation of his Judaism, but is even more aggrieved by Philip's seeming embarrassment of social, educational and linguistic markers of Joseph May's immigration. Truly distraught, Joseph May confides in his dearest friend, Daniel Willard, who lives next door with his niece, Jean. Daniel Willard is a French-born intellectual, nicknamed the *Chevalier,* because he is a model of courtesy, civility and constancy. Undeterred by the sage counsel of his friend, Joseph instructs his lawyer, Paul Stein, to make out a new will in which Philip, who has no use for his father, will not inherit his father's fortune. With the added leverage of Jewish guilt tinged by mordant humor, Joseph May follows Jewish as well as civil law by leaving Philip a dollar so "he make *Shabos* with it, or put it in a crepe band on his hat when it is still the style to make believe you care [about mourning his father]. But it won't make me nothing out. For me—I will be silent in my grave" (HY 43).

Daniel Willard's musically accomplished niece, Jean Willard, occupies the moral and romantic center of Heirs of Yesterday. Jean has lived with her beloved Uncle Daniel since the death of her father many years ago. She is equally attached to her uncle's cherished companion, Joseph May, whom she regards with respect and deep affection. Jean is described by the narrator as a woman "Of high enthusiasms, bravely loyal and

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[9] *Meshumad.*is derived from the Hebrew root shomad *or* shamad, meaning to destroy. Daniel Willard explains that *meshumed* refers to " 'a destroying spirit or one who is inimical to his religion. Hence an apostate' " Emma Wolf, Heirs of Yesterday (Chicago: McClurg) 50.

optimistic, hating narrow-minded hypocrisy as she loved broad-shouldered dauntlessness. She had reached her twenty-fifth year, one of those modern anachronisms, a woman with ideals" (HY 53). Jean observes with disapproval the dispiriting rift that has separated the recently reunited father and son. Over the years, Jean had "come to the anomaly of living an idea" (HY 54) of Philip as she was a willing auditor to the frequent adulatory conversations between her uncle and Joseph May as they extolled Philip's many merits. The novel's subtext turns on the unspoken but transparent desire of Daniel Willard and Joseph May to see their children united in marriage as the friends are in life.

Of course, Jean is not only talented and intelligent, but beautiful. Stephen Forrest, a local artist, appeals to Jean Willard to serve as a model for his depiction of the biblical Judith. As this portraitist petitions Jean, he maliciously reports that Philip May, with whom Forrest has had a rivalry since childhood, has applied for admission to an elite social club that bars Jews from its membership. It is around this pivotal action that the themes of Heirs of Yesterday crystallize.

This chapter examines the synchronous conflicts that assailed Jews in America at the tail end of the nineteenth century. In her unequivocal endorsement of Jewish particularity in an era that favored assimilation, Emma Wolf reverses her previous course from the celebration of the similarities between Jews and Gentiles to a reaffirmation of Jewish difference. Eight years intervene between the publication of Wolf's two Jewish novels and in that interval, American tolerance of ethnic and religious minorities diminished. Louis Harap, Harvard librarian, editor, philosopher and scholar, comments in The Image of the Jew in American Literature from Early Republic to Mass Immigration

on the confluence between escalating discrimination and the topicality of Heirs of Yesterday. Harap observes that "By 1900 the new, more intense quality of anti-Semitism in the United States was well advanced, and Emma Wolf's *Heirs of Yesterday* (1900) makes a frontal attack on it and the rejection of Jewish identity that was its by-product among some of the second-generation"(474).

Although a few other Jewish novelists confronted the anti-Semitism of the 1890s, Heirs of Yesterday does not endorse assimilation as the solution to the "Jewish problem" that is presented in the other books.[10] Philip May's rejection of his Jewish identity may be interpreted as a reaction to anti-Semitism, but Emma Wolf understands the counterintuitive effect of discrimination. Anti-Semitism can cause a retreat from Jewish affiliation, but prejudice also functions as a catalyst for the preservation of Jewish particularity rather than its erasure. Wolf counterbalances the dual responses of acceptance and denial of Jewish identity in Heirs of Yesterday. The novel's central controversies converge around problems of self-definition as the leading characters mediate the relationship between individual autonomy, ethnic solidarity, and national identity. This self-reflexive process is enacted against the backdrop of changing national demographics and rising anti-Semitism, activated by the xenophobia of Populist politics, economic depression, and unprecedented immigration. The final chapters of Heirs of Yesterday are punctuated by the jingoism of the Spanish American War that pushed the nation, already enmeshed in the partisan process of differentiating between Jews and

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[10]Maurice Eisenberg, a Midwestern Jewish American writer, published Dr. Cavallo in 1895. Like Dr. Philip May in Heirs of Yesterday, Dr. Cavallo also denies his race and creed, suggesting "It is not a crime to be a Jew but it is a terrible misfortune"(Qtd. in Harap, 477). Another novel by Horace J. Rollins, Yetta Segal (1898) promotes "race-blending" as a solution to Jewish exclusivity.

Gentiles, immigrant minorities and the Protestant majority, Populists and Progressives, Anti-imperialists and Expansionists to form alliances that would solidify their ethnic identities and national allegiances. The bipolarity of cultural and national claims coalesce at the close of Heirs of Yesterday as America declares war on Spain and Jews enlist for a battle abroad that they have yet to win at home.

In Wolf's fiction, when characters are provided with a choice between opposing social or ideological constructs, the New Woman or the True Woman, exogamous or endogamous marriage, careerism or marriage, entrepreneurship or artistic endeavor, their decisions were rarely endorsed without some equivocation, reservation or hesitation. In Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf once again positions her characters against dichotomous ideologies. Philip May and Jean Willard seek self-knowledge as they position themselves against national and cultural allegiances. Born in San Francisco, Philip May, the Harvard-educated physician, envisions himself as an American. In contrast to Philip May's insistence on his American persona, Jean Willard, who was also born in California, adopts a more inclusive and flexible persona. By embracing a hyphenated identity; Jean alternately considers herself an American Jew, privileging her Judaism in religious and cultural situations, and at other times a Jewish American, asserting the primacy of her patriotic responsibilities during a period of national crisis. On either side of the binary identification, Jean acknowledges her national and ethnic allegiances. The central characters embody the opposing social philosophies of the melting pot and ethnic pluralism, but the novel's ambiguous conclusion, does not entirely endorse either the assimilative nationalism or cultural particularity, accentuating the difficulty of attaining

an easy synthesis between Judaism and America. Typically, Emma Wolf searches for ideological leeway in order to embrace contrary visions of the relationship between the national character and cultural identity. Heirs of Yesterday endorses the contention that regardless of the compromises that Jews must make with America, the chain of Jewish culture is unbreakable, no matter how attenuated by adaptation the link becomes.

In voicing both her culturally progressive and romantic vision, Wolf embraces two opposing social models for minority inclusion in mainstream American life. On the one hand, under the influence and tutelage of Israel Zangwill, Wolf gravitates towards assimilative inclusiveness, secular humanism, and the romanticized universalism of her mentor's melting pot that transforms ethnicity in American uniformity. On the other hand, Wolf was sensitive to obdurate national trends that emerged between the publication of Other Things Being Equal in 1892 and Heirs of Yesterday in 1900. In an era of increasing discrimination for all minorities, Wolf embraces her Jewish heritage and endorses a position in Heirs of Yesterday that favors the retention of ethnic particularity over assimilative conformity.

This vision of cultural diversity was popularized well before it was given its most profound articulation by Harvard social philosopher Horace M. Kallen in "Democracy versus the Melting Pot," which was published in two installments in the Nation on February 18 and 25, 1915. Much of Kallen's argument had already been expressed by W. E. B. DuBois, another Harvard graduate and professor, who, like Kallen studied at Harvard with Wendell Barrett, professor of American literature and the social philosopher, William James. DuBois published "The Conservation of Races" in 1897 and

it anticipated much of Kallen's theory in suggesting that assimilation was undesirable if it inspired contempt for one's origins (Higham 209). Chronologically, Wolf could not have read Kallen's article and it is equally improbable that Wolf would have been familiar with the pluralistic philosophy of W.E.B. Du Bois. Nevertheless, Wolf would have acquired the framework for the debate between cultural fusion and cultural pluralism long before DuBois, Kallen or even Zangwill published their respective postulations. Concerns about cultural integration, of course, predated the Harvard theorists. Anti-Semitism was also a growing concern as nativist organizations like the Immigration Restriction League and the Anti-Imperialist League questioned the viability of Jewish assimilation. Wolf would have been conversant with the claims of the pluralistic debate through the discussion of anti-Semitism by non-Jews that subsumed the entire April 4, 1890, issue of the American Hebrew. The non-secular press was equally arrested by the position of the Jew in American society and San Francisco's Overland Monthly published two articles in its April 1895 issue on the standing of the Jew in San Francisco, recorded from Jewish and Gentile perspectives.[11] Although the specific lexicon was not yet available to Wolf,

[11] The Jewish perspective was recounted by Gustav Danziger's "The Jew in San Francisco," Overland Monthly 25 (April 1895): 381-410, and the Christian viewpoint was expressed by Mrs. D. W. Nesfield. "The Jew from a Gentile Standpoint," 25 Overland Monthly (April 1895): 411-42. Nesfield's position reinforced Jewish stereotypes and tacitly endorsed separatism. Nesfield wrote that the Jew ". . .assimilates just to a sufficient degree to become national, but maintains with jealous pertinacity those positive and essential attributes which mark him as ever a separate nation among nations, he commingles but never becomes one with; he associates but never in sufficiently intimate relations to fuse and amalgamate. He is ever the branch and the fruit of the vine of the Land of Canaan, transplanted and teeming with life; but never grated or budded into the gentile root of which he forms a sustained and sustaining substance" (410).

she was fully conversant with terms of the cultural debate in which Jews were positioned as both insiders and outsiders in American culture.[12]

Kallen's ethnic pluralism was the obvious counterweight to Zangwill's melting pot, and Wolf is clearly aware of the opposing positions as the plot of Heirs of Yesterday gravitates around these polarizing theories. As social and fraternal organizations closed their doors to Jews during the 1890s, Wolf's membership in San Francisco's Philomath Club, founded in 1893, might have provided another arena for the discussion of a multiethnic society. According to its founder, Betty Lowenberg, the Philomath Club had the distinction of "being the first club composed of Jewish women with a regularly adopted constitution in the world." (57). The Club's mission was to "be conservative but progressive, to promote the general culture of its members by the discussion of educational, moral and social topics and lectures by eminent men and women of the day" (Lowenberg 57). Confirmation of the Philomath Club's engagement with racial and religious controversies is apparent from the headline in the San Francisco Call on November 26, 1901 that announced "Ladies Debate Race Question."[13] With both a social and a literary component to the Philomath Club, this organization might have provided another avenue for discussion of social philosophy.

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[12] Wolf's novel predates the terminology often applied to cultural debate. Terms such as ethnicity, Jewishness, Otherness, alterity, mosaic, multiculturalism, and salad bowl represent conceptual frameworks that developed in the mid-twentieth century. When I use to these verbal constructs, I am aware of their anachronism.

[13] The question that was debated at the Philomath Club meeting asked, "Should the color-line exist in women's clubs?" Most Christian women's clubs barred "colored" women from membership. The Philomath Club opposed discrimination against African American women. "Ladies Debate Race Question," San Francisco Call, Nov. 26, 1901: 11.

In Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf represents contrary configurations for Jewish participation in American life and agrees, at least partially, with facets of the social theories proposed by Kallen and Zangwill. Wolf does not formulate in Heirs of Yesterday an intellectually coherent and unifying position but rather dramatizes the consequences of the opposing choices. Both mirroring and anticipating the social debates between ethnic pluralism and assimilation, Wolf positions her characters on divergent sides of the debate over the individual's role within the social polity. In Heirs of Yesterday, Jean Willard is most closely aligned with the tenets of the ethnic pluralism advanced by Horace M. Kallen in "Ethnicity versus the Melting Pot," whereas Philip May's attempt at cultural fusion falls under principles popularized in Israel Zangwill's play, The Melting Pot (1908).

3.3 Mixed Metaphors: Horace Kallen's Orchestra of Democracy vs. Israel Zangwill's Melting Pot

Heirs of Yesterday appeared on the cusp of a momentous paradigmatic shift in the ways Americans defined themselves in relation to the country as a whole. Horace M. Kallen's essay "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" (1915) and Israel Zangwill's play The Melting Pot (1908) inform the proximate but independent resolutions to the interconnected questions about Jewish identity that provide the ideological scaffolding for Heirs of Yesterday. Essentially, each writer asks, "What does it mean to be a Jew in America; and, is it possible to enact both parts of a hyphenated identity?" American historian John Higham relates in Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America that the pluralist ideology, which was always a principal component of

American thinking, although often subordinated to the "quest for unity" (Higham 199), emerged with renewed primacy in the early twentieth century. Kallen's notion of ethnic diversity as a viable model for American society represented a departure from the prevailing vision.

When Kallen, who was born in Silesia in 1882, matriculated at Harvard University in 1903, he was close to casting aside his Jewish identity until Barrett Wendell, professor of American literature, showed Kallen "'how the Old Testament had affected the Puritan mind and traced the role of Hebraic tradition in the development of the American character'"(Qtd. in "Biographical Sketch").[14] Kallen's subsequent effort to redefine his relationship to Judaism was part of an ongoing struggle that began with the founding of the Menorah Society at Harvard in 1906 and continued through his connections with the New School for Social Research, his memberships with the American Jewish Congress, the American Association for Jewish Education and YIVO-Institute for Jewish Research and his eventual support of Zionism.

Although Kallen's Zionism would have little attraction for Emma Wolf, his formulations about the relationship between ethnic and national identity in "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" would have appealed to Wolf's intrinsic humanism. "Democracy versus the Melting-Pot" originated as a response to the bigoted ideas promulgated by Edward Allworth Ross in The Old World in the New (1914). Ross advocated the perpetuation of a unified and uniform America and Kallen countered by

[14]Kallen's papers were donated to the American Jewish Archives. The Archives' "Biographical Sketch" mentions Kallen's indebtedness to Barrett Wendell in an untitled article from the New York Times 17 Feb. 1974: 66. Kallen acknowledges that his ideas were influenced by William James, George Santayana, Hugo Munsterberg and Josiah Royce in Ira Eisentein's "Dialogue with Dr. Horace M. Kallen." What I Believe and Why—maybe (sic). By Horace Kallen. (New York: Horizon, 1971) 183.

suggesting that America should be a "harmony" rather than"unison" of voices. (Kallen, "Democracy," II. 217). Kallen explained to Ira Eisenstein that "Cultural pluralism signifies the acknowledging of diversity and equality of peoples and their cultures'" (Eisenstein 183). Through an extended musical metaphor, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" advances Kallen's concept of a multi-ethnic American society wherein each particular culture enriches America. Kallen's musical trope would have special resonance for Wolf because the harmony of Jean Willard's position is frequently underscored by her musicality.

Petitioning his audience, Kallen inquires whether they desire an America that sings one old song in unison, or would the nation benefit from a variety of voices singing in harmony? Kallen beckons to the promise of America, believing that the country is at a social crossroads. "Before us," Kallen chants, is "a new social alternative," which, if America so orders, can be willed into existence ("Democracy," II. 219). Unfolding the orchestral metaphor, Kallen inquires, "What do we will to make the United States—a unison singing the old Anglo-Saxon theme 'America,' the America of the New England school, or a harmony, in which that theme shall be dominant, perhaps, among others, but one among many, not the only one?" ("Democracy," II. 219). In response, Kallen propounds a new social order in which America's immigrants retain their individual voices, their cultural identities, and create a harmonious America rather than a uniform America. Asserting that one's ancestral endowment cannot be changed, Kallen reasons that "Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or less extent: they cannot change grandfathers" (220). It is

impossible, Kallen believes, to change the Pole, the Italian, or the Jew into Americans without removing their ancestral inheritance and that legacy cannot be altered or changed or exchanged. Just as a rung bell cannot be un-rung, ancestry cannot be undone. Jewish ethnicity is an immutable, descent-based identification.[15] America, Kallen avows, is the beneficiary of multiplicity and variation. Concomitantly, Kallen asserts that selfhood is an inalienable part of any given ethnicity--Polish, British, Irish or Jewish. Therefore their "inalienable liberty" and the "happiness they pursue has its form in ancestral endowment" (220). Simply stated, Kallen insisted that Jews can not stop being Jews, and on this point Wolf voiced her profound agreement.

To underscore his vision of a pluralistic America in which each ethnicity contributes its voice to the national anthem, Kallen extends his musical metaphor to describe a harmonious "multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind" (220), echoing the humanism of William James's philosophy of the One and the Many. Kallen concludes his essay with what might be characterized as the anthem of the multiculturalists. In singing the praises of the distinctive ethnicities that comprised the commonwealth, Kallen composed a new world symphony wherein each culture performed by playing its own instrument, with each contributing its own sound to

[15] Werner Sollors distinguishes between static, descent-based affiliations and mutable, consent-based social constructions. In Sollors's schema, American identity is a matter of volitional consent, whereas ethnicity is a consequence of "immutable ancestry and descent." Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture (NY: Oxford UP, 1986) 151.

civilization on an ever-evolving score. Kallen's coda to "Democracy versus the Melting-Pot" plays out this vision of American diversity.[16]

Kallen's celebratory essay ends on a note of ambiguity, not unlike the uncertainty that confounds the end of Heirs of Yesterday. In closing, Kallen voices his reservation about the reality of a pluralistic society by petitioning his audience and asking, "But, the question is do the dominant classes in America want such a society?" (220). Emma Wolf, at the close of Heirs of Yesterday, implicitly repeats the same question.

Admittedly, the connection between Emma Wolf and Horace Kallen is theoretical, whereas the relational ship between Zangwill and Wolf is authentic. Although the two Jewish authors never met, their mutual admiration is apparent through their correspondence. Despite the absence of Wolf's responses, the authors' literary reciprocity is evident in their reviews of one another's work. Zangwill's appreciative review of Wolf's third novel, The Joy of Life (1896), appeared under the title, "A New Jewish Novelist" in The Jewish Chronicle on Feb. 5, 1897, and Wolf's accolade to her mentor appeared in her review of Zangwill's book, Dreamers of the Ghetto, in The American Jewess in June 1898. Zangwill valued Wolf's review and thanked her for it in a letter dated July 27, 1898, writing: "It was good of you to send me those notices & especially to write so nicely yourself" (Cantalupo, "Letters"133). Wolf wrote appreciatively but also

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[16] Kallen compares America to an orchestra, writing that "As in an orchestra, every type of instrument has its special timbre and tonality, founded in its substance and form; as every type has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society each ethnic is the natural instrument, its spirit and culture are its theme and melody, and harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization, with this difference: a musical symphony is written before it is played; in the symphony of civilization the playing is in the writing, so that there is nothing so fixed and inevitable about its progressions as in music, so that within the limits set by nature they may vary at will, and the range and variety of the harmonies may become wider and richer and more beautiful," ("Democracy versus the Melting-Pot," Nation 100 [25 Feb. 1915]:220.)

insightfully about Zangwill's Dreamers of the Ghetto, suggesting that in "these pen-pictures of world-famous Jewish characters" there remains the remarkable inference [that] each dreamer's dream was the other dreamer's dream—that the Jewish Ideal was always the One Ideal. . . ."(Wolf, "Book Review"118). Wolf deduces from Zangwill's work that the Jewish dreamer, ". . . having once escaped the Ghetto gates could be of the Ghetto no longer, and seeks "love and fusion with an inimical world" (118). Wolf discovered many points of literary confluence with Zangwill's vision as it was projected in not only Dreamers of the Ghetto but in his earlier fictional study of Anglo-Jewish life, Children of the Ghetto (1892). Both authors clearly wrote for Christian and Jewish readers, believing that Jewish literature was of interest not just to a small minority but was relevant to the panoply of human experience. Their literary careers followed the same trajectory as each wrote on Jewish and secular subjects.[17]

Israel Zangwill's iconic play, The Melting Pot, opened at the Columbia Theatre in Washington, D.C. on October 5, 1908, with an enthusiastic President Theodore Roosevelt in attendance. Zangwill's saga of Jewish life in America relates the story of David Quixano's immigration to New York from Russia following the slaughter of his family in Russia during the Kisineff pogrom. A gifted musician, David's symphony is performed through the auspices of a noble Russian-Christian émigré, Vera Revendal, with whom the Jewish immigrant falls in love.

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[17] In her introduction to Children of the Ghetto: A Study of a Peculiar People (Detroit, Wayne State UP, 1998)14, Meri-Jane Rochelson examines the aesthetic that guided Zangwill's literary career. Rochelson suggests that "the impetus behind the varied body of Zangwill's work was not simply that he wrote fiction on non Jewish subjects in order to be recognized as an 'English' writer; it was that he wanted his Jewish subject matter to be recognized not as marginal but as a central part of human experience." The same literary itinerary could be applied to Wolf's body of work, which included two novels on Jewish subjects and three novels on secular topics.

Throughout the play, David declaims that America is a Crucible, a melting pot, where racial hatreds and ethnic tensions will yield to universal acceptance and brotherhood. The intended meaning of metaphor of the melting pot has been parsed by historians, critical theorists and sociologists for well over a century, with changing representations of a popularly adopted model of assimilation.[18] Regardless of the extent to which Zangwill actually promoted an assimilative paradigm, The Melting Pot fervently endorses Americanization. David pledges, "I keep faith with America. I have faith America will keep faith with me" (Zangwill, 318, act 2). But as much as David avows he will forget the past he is haunted by dreadful memories of the massacre of his family and feels he cannot give up "my people" (Zangwill, MP 349, act 2) by marrying Vera, whose past is compromised by her Christianity and her noble birth but most problematically by her father's role in the pogrom. Nevertheless, "fusion of all races" (288, act 1) prevails and the lovers surmount their differences in the crucible of America. The Melting Pot concludes in a resounding tribute to America, with David's symphony celebrating

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[18]Werner Sollors traces the recurrence of the melting-pot imagery before and after Zangwill's drama in Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture (NY: Oxford UP, 1986) 94. Sollors indicates that the melting pot was a term that did not originate with Zangwill but was used as an alchemical and regenerative image in earlier works. Precursors are to be found in Michel-Guillaume-Jean de Crevecoeur's "Letters from an American Farmer" (1872) and in a journal entry of 1845 by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Werner Sollors's reports that "On November 8, 1702, long before any immigration historians would suspect Americans to be thinking about melting pots, [Edward] Taylor came very close to using the term in meditation 49 of the second series. The poem, based on John 1:14, develops a parallel between metallurgy and divine grace and begins with the stanza:

> Gold in its Ore, must be melted be, to bring
> It midwift from its mother womb; requires
> To make it shine and a rich market thing,
> A fining Pot, and Test, and melting fire.
> So do I, Lord, before thy grace do shine
> In mee, require, thy fire may me refine. "(qtd. in Sollors 94)

American unity and the betrothal of the Christian and the Jew. The enormous popularity of The Melting Pot was clearly a testament to the degree that the drama replicated the zeitgeist of the era's quest for unity, especially fervent in 1890s and the early part of the twentieth century.[19] Edna Nahson comments upon the propinquity between the melting pot symbology with the historical moment. The melting pot metaphor "prospered because it provided a concreteness to a cluster of ideas and attitudes that developed independent of Zangwill" (Nahson MP Intro 214). The pursuit of cohesion among disparate nationalities, races, and creeds in Zangwill's Melting Pot is anticipated by Emma Wolf in the nationalistic fervor of the Spanish American War, the event that dominates the closing chapters of Heirs of Yesterday.

Over a century has elapsed since the publication of Heirs of Yesterday. During this interval, the theories of assimilation and pluralism have not remained static. Zangwill's vision of the melting pot, initially positioned as the ideal in the early twentieth century, was gradually supplanted by pluralism as the reigning ideology. John Higham, recounting the erratic course of these social theories, observed that

> . . . the relationship between assimilation and pluralism was not a simple dialectic of opposition. From the outset the belief that a democratic society should preserve the integrity of its constituent groups has unconsciously relied on the assimilative

[19] Historian John Higham relates in Send These To Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America (New York: Atheneum, 1975) that "The belief that a well-ordered society should sustain the diversity of its component groups has, of course, deep roots in early American experience, but it became subordinated during the nineteenth century quest for unity. The building of a national republic gave central importance to the process of convergence, to the making of a homogenous future from a heterogeneous past. The dominant American legend—what was later symbolized in the image of the melting pot—said that a continuous fusion of originally disparate elements was forming a single American people. In the attainment of oneness, rather than the persistence of separate identities, lay the promise of American life" (199).

> process which it seemed to repudiate; and now [1972] that assimilation has lost its momentum, pluralism has lost its sense of direction. (198-99)

It is not my purpose to outline the inconsistencies in either Zangwill or Kallen's conceptualizations of the enactment of American nationality. Interest in Kallen's cultural pluralism and Zangwill's melting pot represent two contemporaneous alternatives to the problem that Wolf conceptualizes in Heirs of Yesterday. In her final representation of Jewish life, Wolf presents the on-going dilemma of ethnicity as a Jewish minority attempts to actualize their place within the American Promised Land.

3.4 Anti-Semitism in the 1890s

The paradox of dual identity for Jewish Americans would not have been as pronounced, nor would it have attracted Wolf's attention, had this dilemma not coincided with a marked rise in anti-Semitism in the 1890s.[20] Until the1890s, San Francisco's Jews had little reason to question the relationship between their Jewish faith and their American citizenship, but this dialectical struggle forms the core of Heirs of Yesterday. Within the Jewish community, assimilated German and French Jews who had arrived in

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[20] I will use the spelling anti-Semitism; however, many alternative spellings and capitalizations appear throughout the reference materials. According to Naomi Cohen, anti-Semitism is a term that "was coined in western Europe in the 1870s and it only slowly came into use in the United States" ("Anti-Semitism in the Gilded Age," Essential Papers on Jewish-Christian Relations in the United States: Imagery and Reality [New York: New York UP, 1990] 128.)

Nearly every discussion of the origin of the word anti-Semitism founders in its inaccuracy. David Gerber notes in Anti-Semitism in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986) 39, "the technical flimsiness of the term . . . becomes immediately apparent to the extent to whether the word 'Semite' is derived from biblical scholarship (the descendents of Shem) or linguistic studies (a subfamily of Afro-Asiatic language), it refers to a number of peoples originating in southwestern Asia, including not only Jews but Arabs" 39. The origins of the term anti-Semitism came out the pseudo-scientific study of race developed by so-called racial theorists like Wilhelm Marr who coined the word anti-Semitism. This racial connotation, Gerber adds, was meant to suggest some racial traits that were inherent in the "group life and individual personalities of Jews" (39).

the 1850s joined San Francisco's Reform synagogue, while their Polish co-religionists joined Conservative congregations. The bifurcation that already existed between the German and Polish Jews of San Francisco was further complicated by a new wave of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe that added a new Jewish constituency to the American melting pot, even in the Far West. A complex social dynamic conjoined and separated these constituencies. Gustav Danziger, in "The Jew in San Francisco: the Last Half Century," estimated the native-American Jewish population between 20,000 and 25,000 in 1895 (392) and Jacob Rader Marcus approximated the number of San Francisco's Jews at 15,000 in 1900 (To Count, 28). The total Jewish population of the United States in 1900 was 342,000 (Fels 372), but in the same year over 60,794 Jewish immigrants arrived from Eastern Europe (Dinnerstein, "Funeral" 276), but the majority settled mainly on the East Coast. Although the Jewish population of San Francisco did not swell in proportion to the New York's Lower East Side, the influx of immigrants revived Populist-Progressive's nativist sentiment and exacerbated commercial rivalry between the Protestant elite and success of upwardly mobile Jewish bourgeoisie.

Yet anti-Semitism, which, by most historical accounts, was either absent or negligible in the development of San Francisco, increased significantly at the end of the nineteenth century, and its rise coincided with the economic depression of 1893. Among the disturbing trends of the 1890s was the reinvigoration of the Sabbath Crusade, the effort of Protestant fundamentalists to require a day of rest on Sundays be written into

state and national legislation.[21] In the wake of union unrest and the Haymarket Square riots, suspicion of "foreigners" increased, resulting in restrictive legislation whose intent was to exclude immigrants.[22] Barring Jews from private schools, colleges, clubs, resorts and residential areas was not unknown in prior decades, but these discriminatory practices multiplied in the 1890s.[23] World-wide consternation over the false accusation in 1894 against the French Jew Alfred Dreyfus is registered in Wolf's novel as Charles Brookman, a successful Jewish businessman and the husband of Jean Willard's closest companion, utters a "suffocated protest against a crime of a nation over which the heart of every reading Jew was bursting with bitter indignation"(HY 98).

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[21]Leonard Dinnerstein, in Antisemitism in America (New York: Oxford UP, 1994), explains that the "Sunday law movement peaked between 1879 and 1892 with Christians believing that God's law should be the basis of human legislation and they predicted devastation for America lest the government proclaim its loyalty to Jesus" (38).David Gerber does not interpret the Sabbath Crusade as falling within the "framework of anti-Semitism" but rather envisions this movement as an example of "ethnocultural competition between religious and ethnic groups for the bestowal of public legitimacy upon doctrine or ritual,"(Anti-Semitism in American History [Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986] 6.)

[22] David Gerber notes in Anti-Semitism in American History (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986) that attempts to restrict Jewish immigration in the 1890s were part of legislation designed to lessen all new immigration (5). Leonard Dinnerstein suggests that anti-immigrant sentiment was evinced by the passage of the Contract Labor Act of 1891, legislation that was backed by a literacy test for immigrants over 14 years old (145). Leonard Dinnerstein also documents rising anti-Semitism in the 1890s by recounting that "Harvard graduates like Prescott Hall founded the Immigration Restriction League in 1894...which future Harvard president, Lawrence Lowell joined in 1909," (Antisemitism in America [New York: Oxford UP, 1994] 43-44).

[23] The famous incidents of social discrimination against Joseph Seligman recounted by Naomi Cohen in "Antisemitism in the Gilded Age: The Jewish View," Essential Papers on Jewish-Christian Relations in the United States: Imagery and Reality (New York: New York UP, 1990) Cohen suggests that the social discrimination against Jews did not begin with the well-publicized account of Joseph Seligman, a prominent Jewish banker and personal friend of President Grant who was barred by Judge Henry Hilton from Saratoga's Grand Union Hotel in 1877. Cohen explains that this incident was part of a longer history of social exclusion (129). Jonathan Sarna records in "The 'Mythical Jew' and the 'Jew Next Door' in Nineteenth-Century America," Anti-Semitism in American History, edited by David A. Gerber (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986) that Austin Corbin, president of the Manhattan Beach Corporation, refused to admit Jews to his resort on Coney Island in 1879 (64).

Given these disturbing changes on the national and local scene in the1890s, it is not surprising that Emma Wolf returned to a Jewish theme as social and political conditions worsened for Jews.[24] In Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf pens a novel that is reflective of its time in repositioning native-born Jews as they sought their place in an increasingly multicultural America. With these alliances and divisions in mind, Wolf interrogates the substance of America as minorities situate themselves along the spectrum of inclusion in American society. The challenge that Wolf sets before Jean Willard and Philip May consists of finding a means to embrace both culture and country. In Heirs of Yesterday, Jean Willard achieves a precarious truce between ethnicity and nationality, but the outcome of Philip May's battle for integration is uncertain.

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[24] After two centuries of tolerance, most American historians agree that anti-Semitism increased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but there is very little consensus about its origins or causes. My purpose in this chapter is not to evaluate the various historical perspectives but to note the concurrence among historians in pointing to a marked increase in ant-Semitism during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Some historians like Leonard Dinnerstein, Antisemitism in America, (New York: Oxford UP, 1994); John Higham, "Ideological Anti Semitism in the Gilded Age," Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America, (New York: Atheneum,1975); Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfeld, "Demonic Images of the Jew in Nineteenth Century America, American Jewish History 89.4 (Dec. 2001): 355-81, and Frederic Cople Jaher, A Scapegoat in the Wilderness: The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America,(Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994) point to ideological sources of anti-Semitism. Other historians, like Eric L. Goldstein in " 'Different Blood Flows in Their Veins' :Race and Jewish Self-Definition in Late Nineteenth Century America," American Jewish History 85.1 (1997): 29-55 examine the racial component of anti-Semitism. Tony Fels, "Religious Assimilation in Fraternal Organizations: Jews and Freemasonry in Gilded Age San Francisco," American Jewish History 24 (June 1985): 364-03 reveals an acceptance and integration between Jews and Christians in some fraternal societies. Jonathan Sarna locates contrary perceptions of the Jew in "'The Mythical Jew' and the 'Jew Next Door' in Nineteenth Century America,"Anti-Semitism in American History. Ed. by David A. Gerber (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois UP, 1986):57-98. Leonard Dinnerstein's "The Funeral of Rabbi Jacob Joseph," Gerber 275-302, proposes massive Jewish immigration and intergroup conflict as sources of anti-Semitism. Michael Dobkowski's "populist anti-Semitism in US literature," Patterns of Prejudice [London] 10.3 (1 Jan. 1976): 19-27 discounts Populist politics and its nativist rhetoric as sources of anti-Semitism. Louise Mayo's "The Ambivalent Image: Nineteenth Century America's Perception of the Jew" Essential Papers on Jewish-Christian Relations in the United States: Imagery and Reality (New York: New York UP,1990):105-26 illustrates the equivocal representation of Jews through multiple sources, including sermons, Sunday school books, adult religious texts, novels, and the secular press.

3.5 Philip May, an American with a Difference

Philip May's disassociation from Judaism affords Emma Wolf the opportunity to expose the various strains of anti-Semitism that troubled Jewish-American life at end of the century. In detailing Philip May's encounters with ideological and social anti-Semitism, Wolf dramatizes the difficulty that even American-born Jews experienced in uncovering a symbiotic relationship between "creed and breed" (HY 284). Adjusting Jewish religious practices to conform with American circumstances may have made Jews appear less peculiar, but for the non-observant Philip May, cultural and national identity are intimately aligned with language.

Throughout the narrative, Philip May disaffiliates himself from his father's Jewish immigrant roots. In Daniel Willard's description of his closest friend, he accentuates the very Jewishness of Joseph May's persona that his son so desperately rejects. As Daniel eulogizes his friend, he forges an image of Joseph May that countermands Philip's perception of his father as a cultural misfit in the American social order. Daniel Willard's reminiscence rescues the true character of Joseph May from the caricature. Daniel informs Philip that

> "He [Joseph May] cannot speak for himself—he never could. He had no eloquence—and very poor English. He was just what the elect call 'a little old Jew'—'Jew-man,' as the lips that call themselves refined sometimes put it .. . . Often, his voice in speaking dropped to a sing-song, his speech into jargon. Sometimes he used his hands for punctuation-marks—they were the only marks of expression he knew; and—God have mercy on his

> memory!—I have known him, in moments of reversion, to mistake his knife for a fork. He who ran could read his faults; they were written so plain on top. But just with a short pause, the runner could have read that Joseph May never drank his manhood away; he never betrayed a friend; he never wronged another man's wife; he never slandered a good name; he never lied himself into fortune or favor. Yet his life was not all a negation, seeing his hand was always glad to follow the promptings of his good heart. His soul was as faultless as this perfect, well-kept hand of yours [Philip's] over which mine rests. All his life he lived true, but he wrote and spoke in a way to make the angels of culture weep. Now weigh him." (HY 257-258)

With these abiding qualities, especially the ethics that guided his life, Philip reflects upon the markers of marginality that were imprinted on his father's life. Although Joseph May was financially successful, he still bore the insignia of his German-Jewish immigrant past. The most notable among the vestiges of Jewish origins was lingual difference. In his written and spoken communications, Joseph May's character is suffused with the indelible Jewish jargon. Wolf infers that language is identity; you are what you speak. In a letter to his son discovered after his death, Joseph scribbled these words:

> My Dear Daniel:
>
> Sometimes it is good when a friend goes away so you can rite him what you cannot say—Daniel I thout to myself that day when she died never I

> Could laugh agen, but now when I look at my son my beloved only chile. Gott knows I am proud and happy-- . . . (HY 257)

Ashamed of his father's scrawl, Philip derides his father's "bad spelling...And bad writing" (HY 257). Throughout the novel, Philip mocks his father's inflected English, which is amply interspersed with the Yiddishisms and stamped with an "unconquerable Jewish rhythm and accent" (HY 27). Philip perceives Jewish marginality as embedded in the inferiority of his father's speech and Philip believes that, with his mastery of English, he can affirm his American identity and distance himself from Jewish difference. Recounting Joseph's speech patterns, Philip summons up descriptors that punctuate its objectionable Jewishness. Philip observes that when his father speaks he "intone(s) like a cantor" (HY 27) and as his father talks he riddles every observation with, *ich weiss viel*, a lot I know (HY 25, 43, 228). In the denigration of his father's immigrant-speech, Philip May comes closest to replicating the anti-Semitic caricatures of Jews who were unable to master English. Joseph May's inflected English is interspersed with German, *Lass mich gehan* (44), *Gott im himmel* (208); Hebrew *Meshumad* (37, 41); and Yiddish, *Wie geht's* (204), *La chachlis ponim* (24), good *yuntoff* (159).[25] The intrusion of a foreign vocabulary dramatizes the cultural divide between Americans and Jews. Philip's mockery of his father's pidgin English is aimed at the tell-tale signs of foreignness that are indelibly imprinted on his father's speech, a social defect that identifies Joseph as not just any immigrant, but a Jewish one.

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[25] The foreign words can be translated as follows: Lass mich gehen - Let me go; Gott im himmel-God in heaven; Meshumad - criminal; Wie geht's? - How's it going? or What's up?; la chachlis ponin - mischief-faced one, implying one who speaks out of spite; and good yuntuff - good holiday.

Wolf mines the linguistic divide between Philip and his father to reference more than the classic psychological tug-of-war between dominant fathers and rebellious sons. Wolf recaptures the contorted Yinglish of the immigrant to authenticate characterization and to signify difference. Joseph May's speech, stippled with Yiddish and German, is a linguistic signpost of outsider status that sets the Jewish immigrant apart from other Americans, and even other foreign-born speakers of national languages. In contradistinction to other ethnic or religious groups, Jews had a multilingual tradition. Unlike other faiths, Jews had a holy language, the loshn-kodesh, (Hebrew-Aramaic), in addition to their own secular language, Yiddish, the mame-loshn (mother tongue), whose very existence separated Jews from the dominant national community that often spoke yet another language. Yiddish not only distinguished Jews from Christians, it positioned Jews as linguistic outsiders to the dominant national culture. One means of erasing Jewish marginality was to adopt the discourse of the dominant culture. To be accepted by society, whether in Europe or America, meant to acquire the language of the insider. In this effort, Jews traditionally became tri-lingual, adopting the national language of the host country. The awareness of Joseph's multilingual otherness impinges upon Philip May's consciousness as he obliquely tries to pass for a Gentile. In seeking admission to a club that restricts Jews, Philip adopts the privileged posture of a monolingual American. Philip, who is invested in formulating an American identity, measures his success by his resemblance to the speech of native-born Americans and his difference from Yiddish speakers. Through the linguistic divide that separates the immigrant from the native-born, Wolf demonstrates how the larger culture derided the immigrant's speech as a

marker of foreignness at a time when such difference was not widely tolerated. Language abasement may be a sign of self-hatred of one's origins and a configuration of self-denial, but Philip thinks he can elude his cultural inheritance through fusion with America, enacted through the acquisition of the dominant discourse.

All things Jewish— manners, customs, culture and religion, cuisine, and especially language--are subjected to Philip's ridicule because they convey a patrimony of difference to which Philip denies he is an heir. The traditional Jewish meal prepared in honor of Philip's homecoming is scornfully dismissed as *fish al la Yitt* (HY 25). If Wolf permitted Philip May's derision to remain unchecked, then her characterization would have substantiated the perception of Jewish inferiority, or worse, Jewish self-hatred. Jean Willard's alienation from Philip May occurs precisely because of his derision of Judaism and the implications of self-hatred with which such mockery is encoded. As Philip listens to his father's account of going to the "the-ay-ter" (HY 27), Philip irreverently intones, "I am not of this world"(HY 30).[26] Invoking Christ's words, Wolf ironically inverts their original meaning. Philip, though he denies it, is part of his father's world to which, willingly or not, he is an heir.

Jewish-American writers, especially immigrants who began to write in English in the first quarter of the twentieth century, exercised multilingualism to achieve a variety of effects. Wolf, too, used Jewish polyglotism, but from a different perspective and for different ends. In contrast to Jewish immigrants like Abraham Cahan, Mary Antin, Anzia

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[26] Philip paraphrases Christ's words from the Gospel According to John 17:14, "I have given them thy word and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (Michael Coogan, Ed., New Oxford Annotated Bible: The New Testament [Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001] 176.)

Yezierska and Henry Roth, Emma Wolf was a first-generation Jewish American and a native English speaker and writer. Many of the Jewish immigrant writers wrote about Jews who were *becoming* Americans; Wolf wrote about Jews who *were* Americans, or at least thought they were. Through the war of words between Joseph and Philip, Wolf advances the ways in which encoded languages duplicate the processes of inclusion and exclusion. Wolf's text underscores the linguistic wealth of multilingual Jewish ethnicity that is diminished by an overvalued American monolingualism. In America, there is no linguistic wiggle room for the Jew to assert his rhetorical particularity.

Hanna Wirth-Nesher comments in "Traces of the past: multilingual Jewish American writing"[sic] on the manner in which immigration to America dramatically altered the need for [Yiddish/Hebrew] bilingualism. Nesher observes that the "separation of church and state on the one hand and the melting pot ideology on the other made Jewish affiliation a matter of individual conscience. Webster's standardized American English forged a nation through linguistic uniformity; it was the Jewish immigrant's ticket to success" (Wirth-Nesher 112). For centuries, multilingualism sustained Jewish identity. The famous Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) ideal proclaimed, "Be a Jew at home and a man in the street." By concealing Jewish identity in public when associating with non-Jews and revealing Jewish identity in private allowed Jews to perpetuate their linguistic distinctiveness as they gravitated between languages of exclusion (Hebrew and Yiddish) and languages of inclusion (German). In the melting pot of America this symbiotic accommodation was obsolete and Jewish linguistic particularism was the casualty. In the United States, the acquisition of English diminished Jewish particularity

and pushed Jews deeper into the American melting pot. To be an American, Jews must speak English. Philip May believes that English is the language of inclusion and the key to admission to American culture. Philip, however, neglected to calculate the significance of anti-Semitism and he discovers that although he speaks flawless English, he is not an American but an American Jew.

By the end of their first dinner together in over fifteen years, Philip reveals how he left San Francisco a Jew but has returned as a pseudo-Christian or modern-day Jewish-American *converso*:

> 'The opening came at Harvard. Thanks to you [Joseph May] I have been endowed with a name which tells no tales, thanks to my mother my features are equally silent. I was thrown in with a crowd of young Bostonians—Harleigh was one of them—who, through the fact that I had been seen in a Unitarian church, took me for one of their own persuasion. It was a suggested evasion of an unfit shackle. There was no preconceived deception. I simply filled the bill. No doubt was ever evinced and no chance of explanation ever offered itself. There was no need to drag in an uncongenial fact when the nature of our intimacy never called for one." (HY 33)

Philip explains that he "wanted to be successful" (HY 32), and he believes that his deception will advance his social, professional and even marriageable status during a time when rising anti-Semitism at home and abroad made assimilation more attractive than ethnic pluralism. The remainder of the novel explores the social causes and personal

consequences of Philip May's rejection of his Jewish birthright. In projecting Philip May's predicament onto the larger map of America, Wolf tests the extent to which long-cherished Colonial models of the America democracy could withstand alteration, expansion and change. For Jewish Americans in the 1890s, finding a means to be both Jewish and American was troubled by religious, social, political and economic conditions over which Jews had little influence.

If Philip's identification with America was as secure as he assumed, he would have nothing to fear from his association with Jews, Judaism or "Jewish-anything" (HY 36). Dr. Philip May is only one generation removed from his father's peddling. Between 1894 and 1906, nearly 6,000 impoverished Russian Jews arrived in San Francisco (Narell 305), and these recent arrivals were undoubtedly a reminder to San Francisco's Gilded Circle of their own immigration during the Gold Rush of the 1850s. Much of the friction that Philip May experiences is shrouded in his implicit desire to distance himself not only from the German Jewish migration but the more recent influx of Eastern European Jews. Wolf understood the apprehension with which San Francisco's German Jews regarded the incoming Eastern European Jews because it was grounded in the same pride and the same fears that mark the shame with which Philip May regards his father. It is his identification as an American and his eagerness for inclusion that kindles Philip's condemnation and condescension.[27]

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[27] Although Philip's behavior is insufferable, it is representative of the times. Jews who had acclimated to America did not want their status as citizens jeopardized by an association with the Orthodox, Yiddish-speaking, rag-picking peddlers who had fled the *shtetlach* and pogrom-afflicted cities of Eastern Europe. Much has been written about the often-mischaracterized relationship between the established German-Jewish Americans and their Eastern European co-religionists. The German-Jewish endeavor to assist the recent immigrants may have been magnanimous but it was also self-serving. Historian Henry Feingold

Writing for Christian and Jewish readers, Wolf must explain Philip's egregious behavior; otherwise, her audience will lose patience with Philip's reprehensible egotism. For the benefit of Christian readers, Wolf demonstrates the painful legacy of anti-Semitism; for her Jewish readers, Wolf must forestall condemnation of Philip as an iconic figure of Jewish self-hatred. To meet these challenges, Wolf unfolds the ideological and social prejudices that undermine ethnic pride and devalue American nationality.

Philip's choice to embrace an American identity at the expense of his Judaism is attributable to repeated exposure to the self-degrading effects of anti-Semitism. As a child in the 1870s in San Francisco, Philip recalls being called a "Christ-killer" (HY32) by his playfellows. Uncomprehending, the child runs howling to Katie, the Irish-Catholic

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cautions against characterizing the relationship between German and Eastern European Jews in America in terms of conflict because this dynamic "has been over-cooked." "German Jews and the American-Jewish Synthesis." German-Jewish Identities in America, Eds. Christof Mausch and Salmons, (Madison: Max-Kaude Institute for German-American Studies, 2003):10.

In Zion in America, (New York: Hippocrene, 1974), Feingold advises that we should not "allow ourselves to fall into the error of assuming that the German-Jewish community in America allowed its distaste for European Jews to interfere with the obligation it felt to help its religious brethren. True they often did not display much grace in fulfilling their obligations, but in most cases they did what had to be done" 127.

John Livingston confirms Feingold's assessment, noting that "More recent studies of the reaction of native American Jews to the influx of Jews from the *shtetlech* of Eastern Europe indicate that the reaction was mixed and not nearly as negative as had previously been reported. While the American Jewish community discouraged emigration and disparaged the immigrant during the decade of the 1880's, by the 1890's the American Jews began to accept responsibility for the new immigrant." "The Industrial Removal Office, The Galveston Project, and the Denver Jewish Community," The Jews of the West: The Metropolitan Years, Ed. Moses Rischin, (Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1979) 50.

Jacob Voorsanger, the long-serving rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, whose views were known to Emma Wolf, was no champion of the *Ostjuden.* Fred Rosenbaum relates in Visions of Reform: Congregation *Emanu-El* and the Jews of San Francisco, 1849-1999 (Berkeley: Judah Magnus, 2000) that "Voorsanger fought to restrict—and at times stop completely—the immigration of Eastern European Jews to the United States. Alarmed that, due to the efforts of the Jewish philanthropic groups in London, steamship tickets were to be sold for less than ten dollars, he [Voorsanger] threw up his hands at this plot to 'dump off the riff-raff of Europe, the pauper element of the East-End, upon American communities' "(94).Voorsanger also opposed any plan that would establish Jewish farms east of the Sierras. Voorsanger said , " 'We must defeat this nefarious scheme to colonize Nevada with Jewish peons!' "(94).

Irena Narrell in Our City: The Jews of San Francisco (San Diego:Howell-North, 1981) writes that "status panic" was not shared by "a large portion of San Francisco Jews who not only understood the significance of the Russian pogroms but had already watched the 1894 Dreyfus trial and the rise of European anti-Semitism with considerable apprehension" (305).

housekeeper, who confirms the young Philip's guilty act of deicide. Katie explains "to the little haythen" (HY 32) the basic premise of Christian anti-Semitism. She confirms the boy's agency in the crucifixion of Christ even before he was born and sighs, "'that's what you be, I guess, my lamb'" (HY 32). Mystified, Philip tries to decipher the conundrum of how even before he was born he was responsible for the death of Christ. Philip replays this pivotal encounter and recalls how the deicide accusation repeatedly arose in his youth, reinforcing his feelings of estrangement and difference. By grounding some of Philip's future conduct in the pain inflicted in his childhood, readers appreciate the enduring effects of prejudice. Moreover, readers will tolerate Philip's self-denial if readers sympathize with the origins of his objectionable behavior. Speaking to his father, Philip recounts how the repeated charge alienated him from others:

> "It was a curious conundrum to start a child with on the road to investigation. I unraveled it as I went—knocked the meaning out of it against the bars, vague, yet ever discernible to the sensitive nature, which ever and again rose between my playmates, my schoolmates, my teachers, and myself, and huddled me into inherited confines. It proscribed me here even in my boyhood. **I was an American—with a difference. I hated difference**. I wanted to be successful—successful socially as well as professionally, I resolved to override every obstacle to obtain that perfect success." (Bold-face mine, HY 32-33)

The barb of prejudice inspires Philip's counter-offensive; his war against Jewish difference will propel him toward assimilation. As a child, Philip does not fully

comprehend the virulence of the epithet, Christ-killer, but as an adult when the deicide charge resurfaces, the narrator notes "The child's incomprehensibility was at last answered in the mocking irony of the man." (HY166).[28]

Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfield in "Demonic Images of the Jew in the Nineteenth Century United States" suggest that nineteenth-century American anti-Semitism was disseminated through many venues, including the public schools, the press, popular literature and church sermons, but, regardless of its origin, "The most enduring demonic component in the negative American attitude toward Jews continued to be the Christian accusation of deicide" (373). That the deicide accusation would be resurrected with a vengeance in the 1890s is not surprising because European Catholic immigrants like Katie, the Irish house keeper, brought the belief that Jews were responsible for the Crucifixion to the United States, where it found renewed life.[29] The repeated encounters in Heirs of Yesterday with Christian allegations of deicide reinforce the notion that Jews

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[28] Philip May's encounter with deicide allegations closely resemble many other accounts contemporary reports. New York Congressman Sol Bloom (1870-1949), who grew up in San Francisco in the same period as the fictionalized Philip May, related a similar incident in his memoir. "One day when [I] tried to join a group of children playing the game [of marbles] a big boy hit me and snarled 'Go on home, you little Christ-killer.' " [Arnold Ribalow, comp., Autobiographies of American Jews, (Philadelphia, 1968) 24-5 Qtd. in Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfield, "Demonic Images of the Jew in Nineteenth Century United States," American Jewish History 89.4 (Dec. 2001): 365].

Israel Zangwill revives the deicide charges in The Melting Pot with nearly identical circumstances to Wolf's Heirs of Yesterday. The Irish servant, Kathleen O'Reilly, is anti-Semitic in the first act but has been enriched by the process of amalgamation in the fourth act of The Melting Pot. Edna Nahshon describes Katie O'Reilly as a "quasi-Jew" at the end of the play. ["Introductory Essay: The Melting Pot," From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2002) 220].

[29] Christological anti-Semitism also played a role in the worst anti-Semitic riot in America that took place in New York at the funeral of Rabbi Jacob Joseph on July 30, 1902. The antagonistic relationship between Jewish newcomers and the Irish on Manhattan's Lower East Side erupted when the police force, which included a significant percentage of Irish, responded with excessive brutality as they were called to control the crowds of mourners. Leonard Dinnerstein, "The Funeral of Rabbi Jacob Joseph, "Anti-Semitism in American History. Ed. David A. Gerber (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986) 275-301.

somehow posed a threat to American Christendom, thus making Philip May's preference to be identified exclusively as an American rather than a Jew more credible, though not by any means more excusable. Christian and Jewish readers of Heirs of Yesterday would also understand yet withhold approval of Philip May's short-sighted evasions. Wolf carefully refrains from attributing Philip May's "backsliding from Judaism" (HY 33) solely to traumatic childhood experiences. Degraded by his early childhood encounter with charges of deicide, Philip May initially deludes himself with the misperception that discrimination against Jews was confined to religious bigotry. He reasons that if he sheds what he conceives of as the telltale the hallmarks of Judaism; a Jewish name--a Jewish appearance, a Jewish family, Jewish associates, or "Jewish anything, or anybody" (HY 36)-- then he can achieve social acceptance. Philip's miscalculation embraces the changing perceptions among historians who assert that nineteenth-century American anti-Semitism can be attributed to socioeconomic rivalry more than religious intolerance. The effects of ideological anti-Semitism are primarily psychological rather than social, but Wolf points to Christological anti-Semitism as the genesis of cultural marginalization. For Philip May the assimilative garb that he dons as protection against discrimination will prove flimsy and transparent. As the novel details, the Zangwillian fusion of the melting pot provides an inadequate defense against anti-Semitism.

In Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf dispatches the social and economic prejudices within her purview in order to detail the pressures that make Philip May's prevarications professionally and socially plausible. By contextualizing Philip May's disassociation from Judaism, Wolf rescues her character from a portrait of pernicious self-hatred to the

delineation of social prejudices that pervert ethnic pride into ethnic shame. Philip May's subsequent collision with social ostracism solidifies his determination to cast off all Jewish affiliations. At the time that Philip May applies for admission to an exclusive San Francisco gentlemen's club, the socioeconomic achievement of German Jews sparked social anxiety among America's privileged Protestants, who became increasing intolerant of Jewish success. Jews, in turn, felt more and more uncertain about their place in America as their social acceptance by Gentiles diminished in the 1890s. In Heirs of Yesterday, these contrary impulses characterize the Jewish reaction to the rising social tensions as the predilection for integration into America competes with the security of Jewish separation.

As Philip May seeks to meld into San Francisco's elite society, he encounters social constructions of the Jew that relied upon a familiar litany of psychological and religious stereotypes common in Europe but perpetuated in America. An instrinsic prejudice that epitomizes anti-Semitism is the belief that Jews are alien and that Jewish difference is embedded not only in religious beliefs but in their psychological disposition and physical traits. Stock accusations held that Jews were innately clannish, ostentatious, materialistic, boorish, superior, dishonest, conspiratorial, aggressive, powerful, and labor-shy. Jews were also accused of being non-productive middlemen, greedy bankers, and political radicals.[30] In the United States, Jews, while not immune from insult, were fully

[30] I have conflated standard definitions and stereotypes of anti-Semitism from various sources, including David Gerber's Anti-Semitism in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1986)3, and Frederic Cople Jaher's, A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness: The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994)1-16.

enfranchised participants in a democracy that with few exceptions had not enacted repressive legislation against them nor instigated state-sanctioned pogroms. [31]

By the mid-twentieth century, Oscar Handlin in "American Views of the Jew at the Opening of the Twentieth Century" and John Higham in Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America repositioned the study of anti-Semitism from its presumptive European origins to American localities and America social groups. Both Higham and Handlin focused "on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when Jews were said to have emerged as scapegoats for the dislocations created by urbanization and industrialization and to have clashed with other groups in an intensified struggle for status and wealth which characterized the era" (Gerber, "Anti-Semitism" 9). Despite widespread disagreement among historians on the longevity, scope and origins of American anti-Semitism, what is clear is that in the 1890s, factors beyond religious bigotry contributed to the escalation in American anti-Semitism.

Philip May presumes that if he emulates American Protestants, he will be socially accepted. Following his graduation from Harvard Medical School, two brief encounters on his European tour reconfirm Philip's decision not to disclose his Jewish heritage. In a Berlin beer-hall, "where the body Judaic" was held "in manifest social disfavor"

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[31] Legislatively repressive measures against Jews in the US include Maryland's Jew Bill and Order # 11. Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfield relate that Maryland's Jew Bill dates back to 1797, when ". . . Solomon Etting, a Jewish merchant and active Republican in Baltimore, first petitioned the Maryland legislature to remove the constitutional provisions that prevented Jews from serving state office. Over the next 25 years the legislature defeated every attempt to alter the law." Rockaway and Gutfield also note that "The most notorious antisemitic [sic] incident in the Union occurred in December 1862 when General Ulysses S. Grant issued Order # 11, which called for the expulsion 'within twenty-four hours' of the Jews 'as a class' without trial or hearing from the military district under his command. . . .After numerous protests from Jews and non Jews, President Lincoln reversed the order." In "Demonic Images of the Jew in the Nineteenth Cenuty,"American Jewish History 84 (2002): 358, 372.

(HY 33), Philip overhears the accusation that "what the Jewish composers couldn't borrow they stole" (HY 34). As a young Jew rises to rebut this libel, he has second thoughts and "Discretion had conquered valor" (HY 34). A similarly anti-Semitic episode transpires in a fashionable Parisian restaurant when a "grande dame" (HY 34) requests that Philip sit beside her to avoid being seated next to "English parvenu Jews"(HY 34). In this staged representation of Jewish social standing, Wolf indirectly cites Israel Zangwill's two-part novel, Children of the Ghetto (1892)[32], by having Philip observe that a "noted English litterateur, himself a Jew [Zangwill], has summed up the situation by saying that the great middleclass, at least hung between the Ghetto it has outlived and the Christian society it can neither live with nor live without, presents the miserable picture of a people astray" (HY 35). Philip's "incognito" (HY 35) experiences in Berlin and Paris, reconfirm his previous assumption that "In short, I have discovered that to be a Jew, is to be socially handicapped for life" (HY 35).

The ramifications of exclusion from full participation in American life supply the controlling force behind Philip's assimilative drive for social acceptance and professional advancement. On the evening he returns to his father's home, Joseph May suggests that Philip apply for membership in one of the San Francisco's prominent Jewish clubs, either the Concordia or the Verein.[33] Having distanced himself from Judaism, Philip announces

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[32] The first part of Zangill's Children of the Ghetto describes the lives of Jewish immigrants in London's East End and the second part, subtitled "Grandchildren of the Ghetto," details the lives of English-born Jews who in their native status replicate Philip's position as a native-born American Jew.

[33]The Verein (German for the word club) and the Concordia were Jewish clubs whose membership consisted of successful German Jews. By 1891 the Concordia was situated at its 1142 Van Ness Street location in Pacific Heights and has occupied the same site since 1891. Bernice Sharlach, House of Harmony (Berkeley: Judah Magnes, 1983) 25.

"'I may as well tell you at once I shall not join any Jewish club. . . . beyond the blood I was born with, pretty nearly all the Jew has been knocked out of me' " (HY 31). The conversation concludes with the coup de grace. Philip's name has been submitted for membership in the Omar Club, which excludes Jews. At this stage in the narrative, Philip defines himself by the values of the Christian American majority rather than the Jewish-American minority. Philip May functions under what Sander Gilman in Jewish Self-Hatred labels as "the liberal fantasy of the melting pot" (2). Gilman explains that envisioning any kind of Jewish fusion with the American mainstream is a "chimera" (2). Philip's miscalculation in looking for self-affirmation from a group that excludes him places him in what Gilman describes as a double-bind. Gilman posits that such an

> illusionary definition of the self, the identification with the reference group's mirage of the Other, is contaminated by the protean variables existing within what seems to the outsider to be homogeneous group in power. This illusion contains an inherent, polar opposition. On the one hand is the liberal fantasy that anyone is welcome to share in the power of the reference group if he abides by the rules that define that group. But these rules are the very definition of the Other. The Other comprises precisely those who are not permitted to share power within society. Thus outsiders hear an answer from their fantasy: Become like us—abandon your difference—and you may be one with us. On the other hand is the hidden qualification of the internalized reference group, the conservative curse: The more you are like me. The more I know the true value of my

> power, which you wish to share, and the more I am aware that you are but a shoddy counterfeit, an outsider. All of this plays itself out within the fantasy of the outsider. And yet it is not merely an artifact of marginality, for the privileged group, that group defined by the outsider as a reference for his or her own identity, wishes both to integrate the outsider and remove the image of its own potential loss of power) and to distance him or her (and preserve the reification of its power through the presence of the powerless). (2)

Philip May gravitates towards the melting pot's promise that he can merge with the social mainstream and be recast as an American. But as Gilman predicted, the more the outsider becomes like the insider, the more aware the insider becomes of the hypocrisy that underlies the transaction.

From this juncture, Emma Wolf juxtaposes Philip May's cultural apostasy against the faithful constancy of Jean Willard. Philip takes up residence at the Palace Hotel, shunning his former Jewish boyhood friends, like the clownish song and dance amateur Sam Weiss. Leaving family and former friends behind, "He [Philip] walked through the gleaming marble corridor with a frowning gratitude over the fact no one knew him there, the idlers about, the elevator boy who gave him passing glance, taking him at his own apparent valuation and dubbing him some visiting aristocrat" (HY 67). Assimilation conceals the burden of his birth and pending the approval of his membership in the Omar Club, Philip's conversion from ethnic particularity to mainstream majority is nearly complete.

Lest the portrait that Wolf paints of Philip May appear too officious to be credible, he actually bears an uncanny verisimilitude to actual individuals. In fiction, objectionable characters can easily be confused with ineffectual characterization. This is not the case in Heirs of Yesterday. Philip May is disagreeable and annoying, but he is realistically represented. In the story, Philip embodies the assimilative stance that Wolf regards with considerable disfavor and Philip's egoism becomes a convenient target for Wolf's narrative barbs. In reality, Jewish particularity frequently yielded to the stronger appeal of American patriotism. Even as Zionism in the early twentieth century gained followers, including both Horace Kallen and Israel Zangwill, many of San Francisco's most prominent Jews self-referentially preferred to identify themselves as Americans rather than Jews. Julius Kahn, the San Francisco Republican Congressman who introduced the Selective Service System, like many of his fellow San Francisco Emanu-El congregants, was anti-Zionistic and opposed the creation of the state of Israel. Kahn pledged, "For me the United States is my Zion and San Francisco is my Jerusalem. And if I have to make a choice between my country and my Judaism, that choice is not difficult. I shall stand firmly and forever by my country" (Rosenbaum 123). Philip May could not have expressed these same sentiments any better.

As a member of the upper middle class Jewish community that were by the 1890s building mansions in the religiously integrated Pacific Heights section of the city, Emma Wolf was familiar with the social protocols of both Jewish and Gentile elite. Historian Gray Brechin, author of Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin, observes that "Though pioneer San Francisco was largely free of the kind of anti-Semitism found

in older cities, the German Jews of Temple Emanu El [sic] and Gentile society remained largely separate as parallel aristocracies"(172). In the Foreword to Heirs of Yesterday, Emma Wolf accentuates the separation between Jewish and Christian social spheres. Heirs of Yesterday opens with the author's observation that

> The tide of social culture sweeps literally upward with the grade of San Francisco, dropping inadequacies on the way. The tide of Jewish social culture runs its mimic parallel alongside of it, mounting hill for hill, matching inadequacy with inadequacy. Yet science proves that, this side infinity, parallels never meet (Foreword np).

Wolf's notation of the parallelism of San Francisco's Jewish and Gentile society is replicated in the Bay area's first social registry, which was published in 1869. The social directory curiously indicated by its twofold lists that some exceptions could be made for presumably exceptional Jews. The social directory

> . . . included over 200 Jewish households, 19 percent of the total list and more than twice the proportion of Jews in the general population. But nearly all the Jewish names were printed on a separate list, with the notable exception of Levi Strauss and the dry goods importer Abraham Weil, who were on the Christian list only. Jews were interspersed among the general elite in the *Blue Book* of 1888, but accounts from the time reveal that relatively few of them were present at the lavish parties thrown by the Christian plutocracy. (Rosenbaum 61)

The interfaith segregation stamped in the Social Registry of the 1870s and the general social segregation of the late 1880s became more pronounced by the time Philip May applies for admission to the Omar Club. Numerous chronicles of San Francisco's history attest to the social stratification that characterized social intercourse.[34] In Visions of Reform: Congregation Emanu-El and the Jews of San Francisco 1848-1999, Fred Rosenbaum documents the delicate divisions that partitioned San Francisco's high society.

> The Jewish elite admired the Christian families of money and power, and to a large extent the feeling was mutual, but evidently both groups drew the line at intimate social contact. Jews "are welcome members of the best society," noted the prolific author Gertrude Atherton, herself a socialite, who wrote in the same sentence that "they are clannish and form an inner group of their own."(61)

The intolerance exhibited in the social directories pales beside the overt discrimination that excluded Jews from private schools, summer resorts, and gentlemen's clubs at the turn of the century.[35] By the time Philip May seeks sponsorship into the exclusive but fictive Omar Club, ". . .the city's class structure [had] hardened, [and] the

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[34]Harriet Lane Levy in her memoir, 920 O'Farrell Street: A Jewish Girlhood in Old San Francisco (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1937) recollects that "Between the Jews on the north side of the street and the Gentiles on the south a pleasant disassociation existed which no one wished to change. . . .The seclusion of the Gentiles across the street was not distorted into intentional distinction or racial prejudice. No one desired to break through the natural barriers established by difference of race or background" (12).

[35] In 1895, William Chambliss independently published his own blue book, Chambliss's Diary, or Society as It Really Is, and it exudes anti-Semitic vitriol that is directed at what the author calls the Jewish *Parvenucracy*. Doris Muscatine, Old San Francisco: The Biography of a City From the Early Days to the Earthquake (New York: Putnam, 1975) 373.

best Christian clubs practiced exclusion or adopted quotas for fully assimilated Jews, while the German Jews in turn maintained their own pecking order that excluded those of their own religion they judged inferior"(Brechin172). The stratifications within the Jewish community of San Francisco that historically divided Conservative Polish Jews from Reform German Jews were replicated in the membership of the city's exclusively Jewish clubs. It is for this reason that Joseph May recommends that his son join the Verein or the Concordia, two of San Francisco's oldest and most elite Jewish clubs.[36] Bernice Sharlach points out in her history of the Concordia-Argonaut that even though

> . . . Jews played an increasingly prominent part in San Francisco's business and civic life, their social world became more self-contained. Choice was a factor in this development, but discrimination played an important role. Wealthy Jewish merchants, in every way the peer of their Gentile competitors, were made to feel unwelcome in Gentile clubs"(22).

Self-segregation, once a choice for San Franciscan Jews, was by 1900 less of a preference than a necessity. The drama of assimilation by San Francisco's Jews, previously marked by competing degrees of adaptation by the Posener and Bavarian constituencies, was further bisected by brazen anti-Semitism of Christian social clubs.[37] By the late

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[36] Bernice Sharlach records in House of Harmony: Concordia-Argonaut's First 130 Years (Berkeley: Judah Magnes, 1983) that the Verein had been founded in 1853 by Jewish and Protestant settlers of San Francisco (13). Later, the Verein merged with the Concordia Club and was incorporated on June 10, 1865. Levi Strauss suggested that the Concordia was designed as a "house of refuge" that would offset the licentiousness of young bachelors in the western frontier town. The Concordia's membership consisted of prosperous Jewish "Merchant Princes," including department store founders Solomon Gump and David Livingston, and United Cigar Stores' owner, Moses Gunst (18-20).

[37] In "Religious Assimilation in a Fraternal Organization: Jews and Freemasonry in Gilded-Age San Francisco," American Jewish History 74.4 (Jun4 1985):374. Tony Fels notes the diminishing divisions within San Francisco's Jewish community. Fels observes, "though two sub-communities were still visible

nineteenth century when Philip applies for membership in the Omar Club, the era of "free flowing goodwill" in San Francisco had come to an end.

The pivotal event of the novel unfolds when Philip May's deception is revealed. Philip has been invited to Dr. Otis's home on Tuesday, April 2, 1898, to celebrate what Philip presumes will be the notification of his acceptance into the Omar Club. Coincidentally, Philip accepted an invitation to Daniel Willard's home on the same date, oblivious to the celebration of the Passover Seder planned for the same evening. Arriving at the Otis family's home, Phil is astonished to discover that he has been blackballed from the Omar Club because Stephen Forrest has revealed Philip's Jewish identity. Wolf intimates that Philip's exclusion from the club is analogous to the exclusion of the Jew from full participation in American society in 1898. In her Foreword to Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf inquired how much time it would take for egalitarianism to progress from a Constitutional ideal to a social reality. In the Foreword to Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf proposes the following equation: " 'If it takes six generations from the hod, or pick and shovel, to make a gentleman of an ordinary American,' asked the wag, 'how many generations from the Ghetto does it take to make a gentlemen of a Jew?' " (n.pag.). The answer, as Philip May discovers, is not in the first generation of American-born Jews.

Dr. Otis, too, slights his former protégé and this rejection poses a conundrum for Philip, who initially cannot decipher whether it is his hidden Judaism or his hypocrisy for

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(particularly at the highest level of Jewish society) ties of business, intermarriage and even, to a limited extent, synagogue membership, had mitigated the cleavage. Especially for those Polish Jews who were sufficiently successful, assimilation into the broader identity of German Jews proved both possible and desirable."

which he is rebuffed.[38] Several days later, Lilian Otis, who was part of Philip "social plan" (HY166) also snubs Philip's hitherto welcome advances. With her sudden rejection, Philip receives the answer to his puzzle; his dismissal is clearly grounded in the revelation of his Judaism, not in his duplicity. Assessing the implications of his ostracism from genteel Gentile society, Philip ponders, "Queer how a man incognito may meet all requirements—and how, with just a birth-mark exposed [Judaism], he is the same man never again" (HY128).

Philip's exclusion provides Wolf with the opportunity to expose the social foundations of anti-Semitism and to question the authenticity of the melting pot's promised integration. Dr. Otis concedes that "'here and there one meets a young fellow who is frankly Jewish, yet welcome in any set'" (HY127). Philip's acrimonious reply implies that Dr. Otis's magnanimous tolerance is grounded in the prejudicial acknowledgement of an exceptional Jew, who is customarily endowed with some extraordinary talent or money. Philip reasons that if the Omar Club admits only the exceptional Jew, "what becomes then of our grand scheme of democracy? What becomes of the glory of the self-made man?" Dr. Otis glibly answers, "A shibboleth. There are no self-made men—in society. Nor elsewhere'"(HY128). Otis bluntly advises Philip that the individual who presumes he can construct his own identity is deluded because society only accepts those who "'share the coincidence of family tradition'"(HY127). Society admits those whose birth certifies their social acceptance. Now that the difference of his childhood seemingly blights his maturity, the expectation is that Philip will concede that

[38] Ruminating on his rejection from the Omar Club, Philip asks himself, "But upon what order had the verdict for his quarantining been issued? Jew—or hypocrite? " (HY 165).

as much as he wishes to deny it, he is an heir of yesterday. Wolf's depiction of Philip's exclusion mirrors the historic reality that kulturekampf does not afford Jews in America any more protection against discrimination than it did for Heinrich Heine in Germany or Alfred Dreyfus in France. With a growing self-recognition, the narrator records Philip's inner-dialogue with his soul as he experiences "a phase of reversion—the rich, strong, emotiveness of primal nature showing through the veneer of culture. And in that moment when he stood alone, revealed, he seemed more the man, more the individual, than he had ever seemed before, and Otis almost feared him--his unknowableness"(HY 135).

Philip's forced retreat from the social status he coveted is marked by one final blow as Stephen Forrest, a former classmate who was always envious of Philip's success (and is directly responsible for Philip's exclusion from the Omar Club), accuses Philip of cheating during a game of bluff, and calls Philip "you damned . . . Jew" (HY136). In retaliating, Philip nearly strangles his nemesis.

In her development of a character whose ambitions are self-delusional and self-serving, Wolf has presented an example of the pitfalls of Americanization. While the choice between Horace Kallen's ethnic pluralism and Israel Zangwill's melting pot are neither as narrow nor as oppositional as the terms suggest, Philip May has embraced the promise of the assimilative paradigm. He had, in following this model, pictured acceptance and integration into San Francisco's high society, melting homogenously into their ranks. When Phil's admission to the social hierarchy is blocked, Dr. Otis accuses Philip of presenting himself "under false colors" (HY 129). Philip protests that "under the Stars and Stripes" he is as much an American as any other "countryman" (HY129). He

shares language, behaviors, education, even mores and values that are clearly indistinguishable from those of other Americans. Neither his anglicized name nor his features suggest that Philip is anything other than an American. Philip enjoys professional, economic and civic equality. But his social acceptance depends on others who see him as an American with a difference, and that difference excludes him from a social hierarchy that is dependent on Christian birth. The irony of Philip May's ambitions is not lost on readers who realize that bigoted allegations of Jewish clannishness, snobbery, superiority and elitism are reversed when Philip May is excluded from the Omar Club, thereby compelling him to seek the security of his own tribe.

Inevitably, Philip falls in love with Jean; his misperceptions gradually yield to his own modulated understanding of his connection to Jewry. Daydreaming, Philip imagines a figure of a lonely Jew on an "endless, lonely road" (HY 217). In this contemplative moment, Philip resurrects the historic journey of the Jew from antiquity to modernity, finally deciphering his connection to his father and the Jewish past. Philip muses that behind the Jew of antiquity and the Jew of the present lay the legacy of persecution and endurance. Philip imagines the "Galley-slave of the Past, lugging forever the memory of a Chain—sport of the ages, auto-da-fes, and yellow patch, hate, and prejudice, and jealous venom, plundered, reviled, stoned, and spat upon—heir of all the ages—unconquerable still—yearning ever toward the wide peace of promise!" (HY 217). Embracing his inheritance, Philip May accepts his legacy. Acknowledging his link to the persecuted Jew of the past, Philip utters, "I am his—he is mine . . . Amen'" (HY 217). With this acceptance of the past, Philip relinquishes his "blind dream" of translating

"individualism into the vernacular" (HY 215). But acceptance does not include Jewish renewal. Philip's recognition is merely the first step toward full understanding of what it means to be a Jew.

Already blackballed from the restrictive Omar Club, Philip May endures an added humiliation when he is banned from admission to his father's venerable Jewish Club, the Verein. Following the disclosure of his son's hypocrisy in the newspapers, Joseph May had avoided his own club. But having been reunited with Philip and basking in his son's professional achievements, on the last night of his life Joseph May returns to the Verein, where he mistakenly believes Philip has submitted his application for membership. When Joseph returns home he realizes that Philip's name was proposed as a vindictive practical joke. Philip's apostasy has been publicized in the press, and the Verein will not welcome a *meshumad.* Joseph May recognizes the shameful intent of this practical joke and he succumbs to a heart attack, dying with his revised will intact. Though father and son had reconciled, Joseph was in the process of legally restoring Philip to his inheritance, but Joseph collapses before his will can be altered. Whether Philip is prepared to receive his father's legacy, and even more importantly whether he is a sufficiently worthy heir, are matters that Wolf debates in the novel's closing chapters. Symbolically, Philip's rebellion has resulted in patricide, and his rejection by the Jewish Verein Club is tantamount to *herem* (the most severe type of excommunication) by the *bet din* (a rabbinic court of law). Philip May regrets his choices and will pay personally and professionally for his misjudgments, but he does not fulfill the anticipated typology of the prodigal son. His regeneration is not entirely transformative because he is still in the

process of reconstructing a Jewish identity that matches his need for conformity with America.

Philip May's preferences are still clear: he would rather be an American than a Jew. As long as Philip remains estranged from Jean Willard, the polarity of Philip's thinking persists. When Philip May's dissembling is broadcast by the vindictive Stephen Forrest in the local papers, Jean Willard registers her contempt. Jean berates Philip, excoriating him with her verdict that "for you who dare to despise your people for whom you know nothing whatsoever, for you, Philip May, coward, egoist, and snob, I have nothing but utter detestation and contempt" (HY 169-70). The narrative from this juncture pivots toward Jean Willard's staunch defense of Jewish particularity and a provisional pardon of Philip May.

3. 6 Jean Willard: Jewish Warrior

Jean Willard, the heroine of Heirs of Yesterday, predictably plays the part of the defender of the faith, or more accurately the preserver of the culture. In contradistinction to Philip May's bicultural detachment, Jean's Willard's American and Jewish identities are dialectically enjoined. Throughout the novel, Wolf balances Jean's American attributes against her Jewish loyalties. Wolf accentuates Jean's resemblance to other educated American middle-class women. She has a passion "for things of the mind" (HY 52); she "reads the daily paper and other current literature" (HY 64); she has a fondness for Heine, Hegel, and Carlyle; she admires Jane Addams, and holds a broad-minded view of the world. She is a talented singer and an accomplished pianist with a preference for Beethoven. She is not hunting for a husband who will support her but does long for

passionate romance. In these pursuits, Jean is not particularly different from other accomplished American women.

But what sets Jean Willard apart from the American majority is her Jewish birthright, an inheritance that is never hidden, erased or denied. Wolf writes that Judaism is part of Jean's "ancient heredity" which imparts "something which has got implacably mixed with our blood and is inseparable from it, which had made us [Jews] what we are long before oppression came near us" (HY 238). Jean Willard's Jewish legacy consists of a myriad of racial, religious and ethical precepts that constitute the intrinsic components of her identity. In Writing Their Nations: The Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Jewish Women Writers, Diane Lichtenstein characterizes Wolf's heroine as "Intelligent, musical, socially adept, the young woman never denies her Jewish identity nor tries to be anything but Jewish. She accepts her heritage as an integral part of who she is, equivalent to her sex or the color of her eyes"(114). Jean Willard's Jewish faith is decidedly reformed and her Jewish practice is more ethical than ritualistic. Despite Jean's secularized Jewishness, Wolf emphasizes the inextricable bond between her Judaism and her identity.

> It [Judaism] slept in the suburbs of her soul, out of the track and traffic of life's uses. She could not have recited the Thirteen Articles of faith at the point of a sword, but she might have said that there was something in them about the glory of the Ineffable to which she unhesitatingly subscribed. She might even have stumbled over the Ten Commandments, having been told by her uncle when she was younger that the First was as

> the whole of which the rest were but elucidation; . . . However, she could remember a few stories of the Talmud and a number of beautiful quotations from the same, having lived so long with that same gentle scholar, her uncle. But she knew her Bible—that is, she knew it literarily—its music and imagery having found instinctive response in her being long before she had the power to discern the good within the song. She could not have defined her religion by a dogma . . . a dogma only proves how truth may be a lie. And, nevertheless, she was a Jewess—having been born one. (HY 63-64)

Although Jean Willard's "religion had always lain lightly upon her," it defined her (HY 63).

In her certainty about herself and her faith, Jean serves as a sturdy foil to Philip May's superficial obsession with social standing. By contrast, Jean is "frankly amused or disgusted over the strenuous climbing up the social ladder of those who had not yet arrived, or of those little Alexanders, who, having conquered their own, look around for more worlds to conquer" (HY 53).

Jean Willard is endowed with an idealistic nature that bears a close resemblance to her uncle, Daniel Willard, who raised her from the age of fifteen. The generational and ideological sympathy between Jean and her Uncle Daniel contrasts sharply with the cultural distance between Philip May and his father. Emma Wolf probably based her affectionate portrait of Daniel Willard on the French-born teacher, journalist, and cantor

of Congregation Emanu-El, Daniel Levy (1826-1910).[39] Like his simulacrum, Daniel Willard is a teacher of Hebrew, French and German who never married and emigrated from France to California in the mid 1850s.[40] The true-life Daniel Levy most resembles Wolf's fictional character in their shared scholasticism and enlightened humanism. Marlene Rainman, who translated Daniel Levy's letters, affirms that Daniel Levy "was one of a handful of Jews in California in the 1850's, who could be termed an intellectual" (86). Martin A. Meyer's description of Daniel Levy's temperament in Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of Jews and Judaism in California (1916) closely resembles the delineation of Uncle Daniel, nicknamed the *Chevalier* (HY 94). The resemblances between the real and fictional *chevaliers* are instantly recognizable. Daniel Levy is described as a man with "many friends and his one thought was to give offense to no one. He was very charitable and liberal to every one" (M. Meyer 120). The fictional Daniel Willard replicates all of these attributes, and the strong biographic resemblance between the cantor of Temple Emanu-El and Daniel Willard enhances the Jean Willard's attachment to Judaism. The affection and admiration that binds Jean Willard to her Uncle

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[39] The March 4, 1910, issue of Emanu-El, the synagogue's journal, records that "Miss Emma Wolf, the well known California writer . . . has favored us with a feeling of appreciation and estimate of the late Daniel Levy . . . this distinguished author [Emma Wolf] has made the late Daniel Levy the model of one of the finest characters in one of her novels" (2 col.3). Qtd. in Barbara Cantalupo, "Introduction," Other Things Being Equal (Detroit: Wayne State UP 2002) 39-40, n3. There is also a resemblance between Daniel Levy and the fictional Cyril Trent in Wolf's novel The Joy of Life (1897). Both Daniel Levy and Cyril Trent are French tutors and intellectuals.

[40] In Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of Jews and Judaism in California (San Francisco: Emanu-El, 1916) 119-20, Martin A. Meyer, rabbi of Temple Emanu-El (1910-1923), provides a sketch of French-born Daniel Levy. Levy graduated from Paris University, where he was educated in languages. He worked in Oran, Algeria. He was editor of the paper *La Lune*, which was confiscated during the Commune because of a cartoon of Napoleon the Third, and Levy was briefly imprisoned. Levy came to San Francisco in 1855, teaching languages at the Boys High School. He was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor for his service in the Franco-Prussian War. Levy was one of the founders of *Alliance Francais* and active in many charitable organizations. He authored several books, including *Les Francais en Californie*.

Daniel stands in contrast to the rebellion that marks other generational tales between Old World immigrants and their American offspring. Jean Willard feels at home in America and in agreement with the ethos of her Uncle Daniel.

Jean Willard's easy embrace of Jewish culture is an obvious counterpoint to Philip May's disassociation from it. Wolf casts Jean Willard as the novel's ethnic advocate because her circumstances make it easier for her to sustain her Jewish ethnicity; as a woman, she did not have to contend with the pressures of a professional or business life that depended upon social acceptance and interaction. But Jean Willard is no goddess of domesticity; her conversation and thoughts are punctuated by references to philosophers and reformers.[41] Jean's friends include professional men like Paul Stein, a lawyer, and Charlie Brookman, a businessman both of whom affirm their Jewish identities. As some men like Philip May move away from Jewish practice and particularity, Jewish women gravitate toward more meaningful roles and identification with Judaism.

The correspondence between Jean Willard and Judaism is further advanced by her association with the biblical Book of Judith. The artist Stephen Forrest insists on modeling his portrait of the biblical Judith on Jean Willard's likeness. As in her previous Jewish novel, Wolf aligns her heroine in Heirs of Yesterday with another ancient Hebraic woman of valor. Wolf probably found the deuterocannical Book of Judith resonant for several reasons, but especially in its depiction of a woman warrior whose defense of the

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[41] Jean Willard gushes over Carlyle, exclaiming "I love him. He is a fire-god—all shams come to his stake. And as for me---I'd like to be his fuel-bearer!"(HY 121). Wolf describes Jean's as ". . .having enthusiastic sympathy with the Hegelian concept of Beauty's being the Spirit shining through matter--. . . " (HY 52).

Jews against Assyrian assault relies on her words as much as her beauty. From a semantic perspective, Wolf would have appreciated the linguistic link between Judith's role as a Jewish liberator and her name, *Y'judit,* which literally means Jewish (New Oxford Bible 41n1). Judith's name embodies her function as the representative of the Jewish community as a whole and as its leader.[42] With Jean Willard serving as an artist's model for Judith, it is not surprising that in Heirs of Yesterday she occupies the moral high ground. The divisiveness between ethnicity and national identity in late nineteenth-century America stands in marked contrast to the synthesis between the individual, Judith, and her people, the Israelites.

In the apocryphal story narrated in the Book of Judith, the leader of the Assyrians, Holofernes, besieges the Israelites of Bethulia. Judith devises a plan to outwit Holofernes. Seduced as much by Judith's beauty as her verbal skills, Holofernes literally loses his head because he fails to anticipate the defense that Judith masterminds to save her nation.[43] Jean Willard, Wolf's late nineteenth century Judith, figuratively castrates the latter-day Holofernes, Stephen Forrest, who has leveled an anti-Semitic campaign against Philip May. Stephen Forrest, who has been lame since childhood, has repeatedly entreated Jean to pose as Judith. Although Jean is not blind to Stephen Forrest's bigotry,

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[42] "The word *Judith* is the grammatically feminine form of the word 'Jew' or "Judean.' Her name reflects how she functions as a representative of the Jewish community as a whole. Like 'Israel,' it is a name both of a people and of a significant individual within its rank. Judith's genealogy is the longest attributed to any women in the Bible." Book of Judith, New Oxford Annotated Bible (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) Apocrypha 41 n.1.

[43] The emphasis on the seductive power of Judith's words is evident in the following passage: "Her words pleased Holofernes and all his servants. They marveled at her wisdom and said, 'No other woman from one end of the earth to the other looks so beautiful or speaks so wisely!' " Judith 11:20-21, The New Oxford Annotated Bible, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) Apocrypha 46.

she "had always pitied him [Stephen Forrest] as a potentially strong character warped, through affliction, into an ungovernable, selfish temperament" (HY 59).[44] Since childhood, Stephen Forrest has been jealous of his former classmate, Philip May. Stephen is particularly resentful of Philip's recent attempt to "sneak into our [Omar] Club with that [Jewish] disbarment?"(HY 58). Jean asks Stephen if being Jew is either a fault or a crime. Stephen quips, "It's a misfortune" for which there is no remedy because "The birth-sentence is a life-sentence—isn't it?" (HY 58). Jean does not tolerate this disparagement, and she demands to know why being Jewish should be regarded as a "misfortune." As Stephen Forrest struggles to pinpoint a cause for his anti-Semitism, he answers "'*Quién sabe*?' he shrugged. 'The reason's beyond me. It's one of those inherited reasons passed down, like a title, from father to son'" (HY 58). Jean Willard's attempt to understand the roots of American anti-Semitism recalls a similar effort by the editors of The American Hebrew. In a survey of the nation's "foremost Christians," the editors hoped "to ascertain the cause of this prejudice [against Jews], and if possible, eradicate it" (Prejudice Against the Jew 29). Soliciting candid responses from Gentile respondents, the Jewish editors anticipated that this inquiry "may help us to understand more thoroughly the causes of a prejudice which. . . . is as un-Christian as it is un-American" (Prejudice Against the Jew 30).[45] Stephen Forrest's anti-Semitism has neither

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[44] The sympathy that Jean Willard accords to the undeserving Stephen Forrest on account of his lamed leg might be a consequence of Wolf's own lame arm, a childhood-affliction that resulted from polio.

[45] The editors of The American Hebrew set four questions before their '"foremost" Christian respondents, Prejudice Against the Jew: Its Nature, Its Causes and Remedies. A Symposium by Foremost Christians Published in 'The American Hebrew' April 4, 1890. (New York: Philip Cowen, 1928)31.

The editors posed the following questions:

religious nor ideological basis but resembles the scapegoat mentality whereby bigots target Jews to alleviate their own fears or inadequacies. By dissociating himself from "others," Stephen distances himself from the stereotypes he associates with the marginalized group. Reminding Stephen that she is a Jew, Stephen suggests his willingness to make an exception because "'you are a woman. Your sex unsects [de-Judaizes] you'" (HY 59). Unlike Philip May, Jean is averse to the prospect of being the exceptional Jew or to distancing herself from her community. Responding to Stephen Forrest, Jean corrosively sneers, "You are not worth hating" (HY 59). Like the biblical warrior Judith, who protects the Israelites from siege and assault, Jean knows that contemporary Judaism also necessitates protection and preservation from anti-Semites like Stephen Forrest.

It is in this defiant pose as a defender of the faith that Stephen Forrest captures Jean Willard. At the exhibition of this painting, the artist explains the picture is called "The Jewess," whom he has captured in an attitude of defying prejudice (HY 180). The canvas provides a visual reminder for readers of Jean's determined stance as the tribal protector.

As several historians have noted, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were marked by ambiguity in the Protestant response to Jewish Americans. Although the last

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I. Can you of your own personal experience find any justification whatever for the entertainment of prejudice toward individuals solely because they are Jews?

II. Is this prejudice not due largely to the religious instruction that is given by the Church and Sunday-school;--for instance, the teachings that the Jews crucified Jesus; that they rejected and can only secure salvation by a belief in him, and similar matters that are calculated to excite in the impressionable mind of the child an adversion, if not a loathing, for members of "the despised race?"

III. Have you observed in the social or business life of the Jew, so far as your personal experience has gone, any different standard of conduct than prevails among Christians of the same social status?

IV. Can you suggest what should be done to dispel the existing prejudice?

The respondents included Theodore Roosevelt, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and William Dean Howells.

decade of the nineteenth century was unequivocally stained by anti-Semitism, a good deal of the eighteenth-century Puritan theology projected a philosemitic typology onto their errand in America. It is from this historic dynamic between philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism that Stephen Forrest's erratic behavior emanates. On the one hand, Forrest reviles Philip May and blackballs him from the Omar Club. On the other hand, Forrest admires Jean Willard and wishes her to pose for him. Jonathan Sarna explains in " 'The Mythical Jew' and the 'Jew Next Door' " that the nineteenth century was marked by competing conceptions of the Jew and one means of accommodating the contradiction between received wisdom and perceived circumstance was to make an exception. Moreover, we see in Stephen's prejudice that the rigid polarity between Jews and non-Jews falls apart. In the Progressive Age, anti-Semitism emanated from multiple perceptions and prejudices of the Jew and each stereotyped variation reflected the insecurities of the dominant group. Stephen Forrest hates Jews but will make an exception in Jean Willard's case because her comeliness complements his aesthetic sensibilities and he is, moreover, unabashedly attracted to the forbidden Other whom he depicts as the sexually forbidden Judith. Forrest, however, reverts to a predictable anti-Semitic posture when he paints a companion study of the stereotypical ugly Jew, using Joseph May as his model. Eventually, Stephen acts out his status panic or status envy upon the professionally successful Dr. Philip May by publicly exposing the doctor's Jewish identity in a portrait entitled 'The Jew' (HY 152). Envisioning this picture, Stephen lays out his plan to sketch Philip May " 'as he never chose to be painted before—full face, not profile—at the moment when his counterfeit bit of pasteboard was

torn to shreds by a set of finical young Christians who politely shut their club-door in his face' "(HY 151). However, Wolf's retribution is enacted through the depiction of Stephen Forrest as a mean-spirited, vindictive modern-day Holofernes who is verbally assaulted by Jean Willard in her capacity as a latter-day Judith, a role that Jean repeatedly performs throughout Heirs of Yesterday.

Similar encounters with "*ordinary* anti-Semitism" intrude on Jean Willard's social life. In "Anti-Semitism and Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past," David Gerber differentiates between "*ordinary*" instances of discrimination that are a "commonplace phenomenon of daily life" and the "*extra-ordinary* anti-Semitism which has existed in periods of intense social crisis, strain, or change"(29). The so-called "ordinary" encounters with anti-Semitism prompt Jean Willard to reassess her own allegiances as well as contravene the example of Jewish evasion set by Philip May.

The uneasiness that accompanied social integration between Jews and Gentiles unfolds at a wedding reception that could have been lifted from a Jane Austen novel had Wolf not depicted a Jewish wedding. The biting dialogue is so sharply rendered that I suspect Wolf experienced a similar scene and chose to dramatize it in Heirs of Yesterday. The status rivalry between successful Jewish merchants of the 1890s and San Francisco's Protestant social elite provide the fuel for the perpetuation of anti-Semitic stereotypes regarding the professionally and financially successful Jews assembled at the wedding. Jean Willard encounters her former classmate, Miss Goyne, at the wedding reception. Miss Goyne acknowledges that she has become distanced from her former Jewish

classmates because "'our social ways separated somewhat . . .'" (HY 191-92). Miss Goyne, (whose name approximates the occasionally pejorative Yiddish word for Gentile, *goy*) condescendingly describes the Jewish guests "in a tone that suggested the 'citizen' speaking of the 'stranger'" (HY 192). Miss Goyne singles out Philip May as "'the Jew who would be a Gentile'" (HY 195). Miss Goyne is not shy about articulating her disapprobation as she pontificates, "Well, you know how it is. We think very little of a man who is ashamed of his religion, of course. We all respect you [Jews] so much and think it is lovely when you keep up the forms and everything" (HY 191-92). Jean caustically responds, "'That is nice of you'" (HY 193). Miss Goyne accedes that "We were so surprised" to learn that Philip May is Jewish because "'You see he has none of the characteristics—'" at this point Jean interrupts and substitutes the word, "'Caricaturistics'" (HY 193). So-called racial or characterlogical prejudices like those expressed by Miss Goyne reinforce the social abyss that separated American Jews from other American citizens. Miss Goyne's "*ordinary*" anti-Semitism also reminds Wolf's readers that at the turn of the century the social reality of Kallen's theoretical postulations for an ethnically inclusive democracy were more visionary than functional.

Seeking to redefine Jewishness as well as Judaism within the constructs of late nineteenth century American freedoms and prejudices, Jean Willard addresses with a close circle of Jewish friends questions about Jewish identity that were in flux at the end of the nineteenth century. Evolving constructions of Jewishness under the assault of anti-Semitism at the turn of the century are the recurrent topic of intra-communal debate in the novel. The paradox posed by constructing a stable identity positioned between culture

and religion became more problematic in America than elsewhere. There was little if any discussion prior to the twentieth century of Judaism as an ethnicity and even less attention to Jewishness as representing a culture rather than a religion. Jews historically described themselves as Hebrews, Israelites, and even members of the Jewish race, accepting rather than rejecting a biological bond. These permutations on Jewish identity were nascent in America from the mid-nineteenth century as Judaism reformed its practices and Jews in America positioned themselves as fully enfranchised citizens. For some Jews, like Paul Stein, Judaism represents an indelible part of his genetic code because Judaism's "'. . . not religion but race and there's no way out of race Judaism except by the slow honeymoon of intermarriage'" (HY 105). Paul recognizes that Judaism has experienced pivotal changes, and he insists that contemporary American Jews should disassociate themselves from the romanticized Messianism of Old World Judaism. Jean Willard contradicts Paul Stein's anti-millennialism by quoting her Uncle Daniel's assertion that "While the Jew stands, his dream [of the Messianic Age] stands" (HY 94).

In an extended debate intended largely for the elucidation of a Christian audience, Wolf's characters delineate the adaptations that have occurred in the Jewish community following the *Haskalah* (Enlightenment). The repartee among this in-gathering of Jews demonstrates the tensions that pulled at American-born Jews as they reconfigured the relationship of the American present to the Jewish past. In assembling a spectrum of young, middle-class American-born Jews--Jean Willard, Paul Stein, Vic Davis, Ted Hart, Laura and Charlie Brookman-- Wolf displays the ideational diversity even within the

Reform community. Paul Stein hypothesizes that Philip May wishes to distance himself from "the ignominies of the past against which we are still combating: that to-day we excuse ourselves on the score of being descendants, often to the exclusion of the more vital responsibility that to-day will be yesterday to-morrow, and that someday we will be ancestors"(HY102). Paul concedes that "looking back vision is not pretty'" (HY 104) but to dismiss his share in a shared past is to deny part of his present identity.

Jean is more forgiving of Philip May's pretense than Paul Stein. Initially, Jean views Philip's apostasy as synonymous with "patricide" (HY 256), but she gradually accepts Philip's rehabilitation, especially as her physical attraction to him becomes more difficult to repress. Philip himself experiences a simulated *bar mitzvah* as he belatedly acquires the basic principles of Judaism. By prepping Philip, Wolf provides non-Jewish readers with a primer on the Americanization of Judaism and the accommodations of the faith to an increasingly humanistic vision.

Philip imbibes from Wolf's Jewish exegetes the tenets of Reform Judaism as he listens to an extended debate between Daniel Willard, a romantic progressive, and Paul Stein, a pragmatic realist, as they mediate the incongruities between Jewish faith and contemporary American citizenship. Estranged for fifteen years from synagogue worship, Philip is positioned as a Jewish-neophyte who surveys the accommodations of Judaism to American life. Attending a *Shabbos* (Sabbath) service following his father's death, Philip observes an organ in the synagogue, the service conducted in English, and a Gentile professor from Stanford University seated on the *bimah* (pulpit). Daniel Willard explains, "'It was all Judaism—robbed of its provincialism and anachronisms'" (HY 235). As the

cantor intones the "trumpet(s) the glory of the '*Shemah*' the hope-cry and star of a people through aeons of misunderstanding, of exultation, and despair" (HY 231), Wolf's narrator reports its revitalized promise. Anticipating the renovation of the Jewish testament of faith from "Hear, O Israel, the Lord Our God, the Lord is One," to the expression of a universal creed, 'Hear, O Humanity, the Lord Our God, the Lord is One'" (HY 231), Wolf foresees the penultimate vision of Zangwill's melting pot. Instructing Philip as if he were in *heder* [a school room where Hebrew is taught], Daniel explains "that the Law was never to be a sealed matter—that it was always to remain open to the interpretation of the search-light of progress" (HY 235). Like a New World *melamed* [elementary school teacher], the *Chevalier* articulates Judaism's reformed Creed, announcing that "I can hear the silent, continuous, unhampered stride of the Jew, keeping step with time. As though he, the freeman, were moving on to the brink of the Universal . . ." (HY 236). Relinquishing Jewish claims to Chosenness, Daniel quips "time has taught me the mockery of any divine nepotism" (HY 237).

When American reforms have pushed Judaism closer to Christianity, and even closer to a Universal creed, what then remains of the Jew? Imbued from birth with a Jewish code of ethics that is "'implacably mixed with our blood '" (HY 238), Judaism endures because of its intrinsic belief in a monotheistic God. In this unshakeable tenet, Judaism locates both its distinctiveness and immutability. Daniel asserts "'Because in the eternal flux and vanity of all things, forms, and ceremony, and dogma, God remains. God is the keystone of Judaism. When God stands, the Jew stands'" (HY 242). Judaism retains its particularity, its tribalism and its creed, even as it moves towards the Universal.

Jewishness is embedded in descent; a Jew cannot alter this inheritance and as Horace Kallen expounded in "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot," Jews "cannot change their grandfathers" (220).

3.7 Jewish Americans in the Spanish-American War

Heirs of Yesterday ends with a call to arms. The political discourse of Manifest Destiny enlarges Wolf's canvas as a national "calamity brought the nation as one man to its feet" (HY 261). With the sinking of the Maine and the loss of 250 American lives on February 15, 1898, expansionist fervor triumphed over anti-imperialist protest. By May 25, 1898, Congress had approved the expenditure of fifty million dollars in war preparations and President McKinley had ratified a declaration of war (Breschin 132). San Francisco's Overland Monthly applauded the American opportunity to expand "'on an equal level with European powers in the expansion of empire by Aryans'" (Qtd. in Breschin 131-2).[46] By May 1, 1898, the patriotic exhilaration had roused the nation, providing Emma Wolf with a singular opportunity to enlist her Jewish characters-- Philip May, Paul Stein and Jean Willard-- in the service of their country and literally become Americans first. Philip May and Paul Stein join the First California Volunteer Infantry Regiment which was based at the Presidio. In the closing paragraphs of Heirs of Yesterday, Wolf captures the patriotic tableaux as the fleet of the First California Regiment sails out of San Francisco harbor "toward five o'clock on the afternoon of May 25, 1898" (HY 296). Crowds watched as:

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[46] Gray Brechin quotes from "America's Interest in China," Overland Monthly 31.182 (Feb. 1898):178.

> Around the cove came the gay dancing flotilla, resplendent in fluttering bunting and flags and pennants, in the midst of which, black with humanity and war-paint, proudly breasting the wind and billows, rode the pioneer fleet of invasion—the City of Peking in the lead, closely followed by the Australia and City of Sidney. (HY 286-87)[47]

Wolf's patriotic flourishes must have resonated with Israel Zangwill who concludes The Melting Pot with a similar spectacle.

In contrast to final patriotic display, Wolf initially seems to align her story with the anti-imperialists' campaign. The omniscient narrator describes how "'Manifest Destiny' was at work with its hideous means—there was no longer any individual life—all was national"(HY 261). But Wolf's critique of Manifest Destiny wanes as she enlists the Jewish cast of Heirs of Yesterday in the service of their nation. The Spanish American War supplies the final opportunity for Wolf's bi-culturally conflicted characters to resolve the dichotomy between ethnic identity and national conformity. An understanding of the political and racial agendas that comprised various factions of the anti-imperialists helps to decipher Wolf's literary decision to forego her reservations and send her Jewish characters off to serve in a war in the Philippines.

The fervent discourse of the Expansionists as well as the anti-imperialists was propelled by seminal issues regarding polity, morality and race. When the nation

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[47] "The Experiences of the First California Volunteer Infantry," The Spanish American War Centennial Website 7 Feb. 2008, < http://www.spanamwar.com/1stCAinf.htm> confirms the accuracy of Wolf's observations and the chronology in Heirs of Yesterday. The Website reports that, "On May 25, the 1st California steamed for the Philippines." The historical record also states that "The First California [State Militia regiment] took its rush training, was mustered into the U.S. forces, and left San Francisco May 26, 1898, with the rest of the expedition transports City of Pekin [alternative spelling], Australia and City of Sydney."

expanded its reach to the Philippines, America had to decide its destiny, and the often--repeated question of the era asked, whether America was to be a nation or an empire. Expansionists and anti-imperialists engaged in a protracted debate that centered on reconsiderations of national, racial and cultural identities. As the country disputed the constitutionality as well as the ethics of imperial conquest, racist rhetoric infused the argument. The anti-imperialist position had two trajectories, one was political and the other racist. Some anti-imperialists objected to the unconstitutionality and the anti-republicanism of imperial acquisition. Walter Benn Michaels explains in "Race into Culture: A Critical Genealogy of Cultural Identity" that a dedicated and decent segment of the anti-imperialist campaign objected to a "war of conquest,' and argued that President McKinley lacked the constitutional authority "to govern any person any where outside the constitution" (656 n.2). Moreover, the Constitution made no exception for an armed entry by US forces into the affairs of a nation "who do not form an integral part of our union" (Michaels 656 n.2). Many prominent citizens, including William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Charles Eliot Norton, and Jane Addams, were genuinely perturbed by the imperialist arc of Manifest Destiny. From her guarded endorsement of the war, Emma Wolf might have concurred with the unconstitutionality of the imperialism. However, a vocal contingent of the Anti-Imperialist League was bigoted and xenophobic. A significant portion of the Anti-Imperialist League objected to the annexation of the Philippines because the conquest would impose on the United States, in the words of Mrs. Jefferson Davis, "fresh millions of foreign negroes" who were "even more ignorant and more degraded than those in our Southern States"(235). The blatant bias against

immigrants and Asians among anti-imperialists undoubtedly perturbed Wolf, whose novel Heirs of Yesterday is particularly attuned to the minority marginalization and the inequity of anti-Semitism. Wolf is not contemptuous or consciously racist in her depictions of ethnic minorities, but her characterization of Asians, and particularly Japanese, who are presented in servile positions and referred to by the common derogatory nomenclature of the day as Japs, is perturbing. Wolf would not, however, have in any way subscribed to the despicable racism of the anti-imperialists, despite her occasionally pejorative colloquialisms. For twenty-first-century readers, Jean's request that one of her friends sing a "coon song" (HY108) is another strident reminder of the racially charged language of the late nineteenth century that was deeply imbedded in the discourse of the educated American Jewish middle–class. To seek excuses for these lapses would deny their offensiveness, but Wolf's racially-laden language and her insensitive characterizations of minorities are unintentional indiscretions rather than deliberate offenses.[48] Wolf did not consciously disparage minorities, as her contemporary Frank Norris does in McTeague. Nevertheless, Wolf's discriminatory errors are, in any age, unacceptable. Wolf's presumed objections to the racist elements of the anti-imperialists suggest that whatever reservations she held about Expansionism, they were easier to overcome than the intolerance of the anti-imperialists.

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[48] Wolf's representation of Asians alternates between demeaning and tolerant. Cyril Trent defends "unoffending Chinese" who were attacked in The Joy of Life (Chicago: McClurg, 1897) 28. On the other hand, Eleanor Herriott is offended when "two Chinamen entered [a crowded public conveyance], and seated themselves with ease beside her; Eleanor's face gave no evidence of her inward shudder of repugnance" in A Prodigal in Love (New York: Harper, 1894) 26. Gwen Heath refers to her servant as "the Jap" in Fulfillment: A California Novel (New York: Henry Holt, 1916) 344.

Selecting the militaristic option enables Wolf to demonstrate the Jew's ability to assimilate into the American melting pot. Through their participation in an entirely American venture for a patriotic American cause, the Jewish characters can ostensibly secure their identities as Americans. Where admission to fraternal clubs failed, the American Red Cross and the U.S. Army provide national conduits through which the "inassimilable" Jew is able to put aside his difference. Jean Willard volunteers for the American Red Cross, Paul Stein enlists in the California First Regiment, and Philip May serves on a naval ship bound for the Philippines as acting assistant surgeon. As the novel closes, Paul Stein and Philip May board the City of Peking on May 25, 1898, to confront their destiny.

Wolf captures this period of patriotic Expansionism with occasional reservations, but the narrator does not linger over tentative misgivings about America imperialism.[49] In Heirs of Yesterday, the narrator's doubts diminish as Jean Willard finds herself possessed by a "fanatic zeal" (HY 263) in those heady days of volunteering for the Red Cross Society. The estrangement between Philip May and Jean Willard subsides as their investment in their service to America eclipses their ethnic skirmishes. But the anticipated resolution of rival claims of identity does not materialize. The notion that America can be the cauldron in which the divisions of Jewish particularity might be

[49] If Wolf's reservations about the war were muted, they reflected San Franciscans' general support of the war. Gray Brechin captures the local temperament in Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006)138-42. Brechin explains that the prosperity of San Francisco was linked to the Philippines because the depression of the 1890s had crippled the city's economy and brought many merchants perilously near failure so the prospect of US government investment in San Francisco as a source of contracts for the Pacific fleet was a necessary part of the repair of the local economy. Superior Court judge Edward A. Belcher told the city's business leaders that San Francisco will not grow without the continuing American occupation of the Philippines. The Philippines would not only provide resources to the mainland but would stimulate San Francisco's real estate market

resolved through the assimilative enterprise of service to America falls flat as Wolf denies her readers a happy ending where differences dissolve into an American melting pot. Jean Willard, who has previously encountered the prejudices by which the majority culture obstructs Jews from full admission in American society, is provoked by the "fine distinctions" (HY 275) that circumscribes her service to her country. The incident captured in the closing chapters of Heirs of Yesterday has such authenticity that it is easy to deduce that Wolf might have been the subject of a similar discriminatory slight, pointing out her otherness in social settings.

It is not improbable that Wolf also drew upon her own experience as a Red Cross volunteer because a "Miss Wolf" is listed as an active member of the 16 Post Street chapter of the Red Cross in a "Report of the Executive Committee for the Two Months Ending, June 30 1898" by Mrs. Theo. E. Smith, Manager "Red Cross Department." Jean Willard attends a meeting of Red Cross volunteers during which "a vote of thanks was offered to all the ladies who had given assistance to the soldiers, especially for the splendid patriotism shown by the Jewish and colored ladies" (HY 275). Jean resents these "fine distinctions" because, as she explains to Paul, "'they're not fine'" (275). Wolf repeatedly advances the belief through their volunteerism for an American cause—whether in the armed forces or in the American Red Cross—Jews might exchange their identification with an ethnic minority for American credentials. And with equal insistence this opportunistic hope is diminished. Paul Stein who is billeted at the Presidio, suggests to Jean under a flapping American flag that "'...here we [Jews] are—answering; with no spread-eagleism, only in common decency, wiping out, perhaps, an old-time unjust

accusation—with our lives. On the battlefield all blood flows red'" (HY 275-76). In the end, Paul Stein sacrifices his life for the American cause in the Philippines, but Wolf is not at all certain that Paul's patriotism has afforded him full honors as an American without the asterisk of difference appended to his service. For Paul the battle between communal survival and national acceptance is indecisive.

The absence of any clear mediation between ethnic pluralism and assimilation at the end of Heirs of Yesterday attests to the indecision and uncertainty that accompanies cultural transformation. Jean Willard and Philip May at last recognize the futility of resisting their mutual attraction, but their philosophic differences remain. Wolf is a novelist, not a miracle worker. And it would be merely a far-fetched fantasy to convert Philip May from a *meshumad* into a religious zealot and Jean from a romantic idealist into a sardonic pragmatist. Although Jean and Philip are now romantically attached, the couple remains ideologically estranged. Philip acknowledges that "'I have not changed . . . in spite of the lesson. I still stand stolidly by my first principles" (HY 282). He insists that he "'hated the badge of difference'" (HY 282) and it was his desire be "'an individual, not a class'" (HY 283). Seeking release from the Ghetto, Philip explains that "I decided I would not be fate's social cripple linked by an invisible chain to a slavish past. *I resolved to break the chain*'" (HY 283), but he discovers that identity is a matter of willed self-creation as much as socially-imposed construction. Ultimately, Philip concedes that his Jewishness is as much a consequence of descent as consent, and he admits, "I discovered *you can never break the chain*'" (HY 283). An unwilling heir, Philip remains bound to an unwelcome past more by immutable determinism than

personal inclination. Although he understands his link to tradition, this insight does not alter his feelings about either Jewish birth or Jewish beliefs. Philip confesses that his connection to Judaism "... has not made me any gladder to be a Jew than I was before—even though I know that the thought of the unfettered Jew is the same as that of the unfettered Christian, even though I have been taught that breed is stronger than creed—and even though I know that the Jew is no longer a religion apart—only a race apart" (HY 284). Even with his awareness of his cultural bond to Judaism, Philip resists ethnic particularity, reinstating his contention that "I have never thanked God that I am different from other men" (HY 284). Heirs of Yesterday proffers no reclamation of Judaism, no embrace of its ethnic alterity, no adjudication between a constructed American identity and an imposed Jewish inheritance. If anyone can mediate Philip's resentment of his "difference" (HY 32-33), it is Jean, whom Philip "looks up to as other men look up to their heaven" (HY 285). Even his worship of a Jewish ideal can not convert Philip from an apostate into a believer, but he concedes that "I cannot help myself—you [Jean] have become my religion—if you are Jewish, must I not too be a Jew?'" (HY 285). Perhaps it is not enough to be a Jew by association rather than affiliation, but this is as far as Dr. Philip May will go in pursuing the pluralistic paradigm.

Philip May has not succeeded in solidifying either his American or Jewish identity. The archetypal American to which Philip aspired remains beyond his reach. The New England Puritan pedigree embodied in Philip's Harvard classmates is closeted behind the locked doors of the Omar Club which has denied him entry. The Spanish-

American war offers Philip a means of inserting himself into American history and, as semi-Jewish patriot, he leverages his ethnic allegiance against his national commitment.

3.8 Conclusion: Jewish Americans and American Jews

From the romantic dénouement of Heirs of Yesterday, readers might expect that the anticipated union of Philip May and Jean Willard to coalesce in the satisfactory integration between the claims of Jewish ethnicity and American nationality. Yet Wolf resists a formulaic remedy that would opportunistically stabilize identities that defy codification. Heirs of Yesterday concludes with proclamations of love, but it does not resolve the inherent contradictions posed by the cultural models proposed in either Kallen's "Diversity Versus the Melting-Pot" or Zangwill's The Melting Pot. Wolf does not locate in Heirs of Yesterday a workable paradigm through which Jews in America can sustain dual identities within the social frameworks of the late nineteenth century. The inadequacies of the extant models for the construction of an identity that could embrace both cultural continuity and change are apparent in the novel's irresolute conclusion. For Wolf to resist the happy ending of nineteenth-century fiction; and, even more tellingly, to stifle her innate proclivity for romantic fulfillment points to her determination to demonstrate the inadequacy of both integrative and pluralist models for Jewish identity at the turn of the century.

Israel Zangwill was perturbed by the indecisive conclusion of Heirs of Yesterday and expressed his reservations in a letter composed shortly after the novel's publication. Zangwill wrote to Wolf on December 10, 1900, that "Your end seems to emulate the ambiguity of Charlotte Bronte's in "Villette" with an even greater uncertainty. I don't

know if it's a good plan" (Cantalupo, "Letters"135). Louis Harap, who commented on Emma Wolf's Jewish novels in his 1974 study of Jewish literature published by JPS, The Image of the Jew in American Literature: From Early Republic to Mass Migration, also remarked upon the uncharacteristic skepticism of Heirs of Yesterday. Harap postulates that that by the time Emma Wolf completed Heirs of Yesterday, she "must have undergone disillusioning experiences with non-Jews, for her conclusions in this last novel are rather pessimistic" (476). The fusion or amalgamation between Judaism and America that Zangwill ultimately dramatizes in The Melting Pot was absent from Wolf's novel despite the respective patriotic panegyrics that envelop the final passages of their texts. Edna Nahshon conveys in her introduction to The Melting Pot how Zangwill's central metaphor is dramatized in the play's final scene as Jewish tradition coalesces into American nationalism. Nahshon describes the melodramatic moment when the metaphor of the melting pot is actualized:

> This merger of Judaism and Americanism is apotheosized in the play's grand finale, with its patriotic amalgam of the Jewish Sabbath and the Fourth of July, and the Statue of Liberty, bearing the words of Emma Lazarus, a Jewish poet, beckoning and shining her light upon the vessels filled with immigrants from all corners of the earth arriving in this New Jerusalem. (Nahshon 220-221)

Wolf's novel ends with a similar opportunity to integrate American patriotism with Jewish traditions. Wolf, too, describes the procession of America's flotilla as it sails out through the Golden Gate, past the harbor's storied landmarks—Alcatraz, the Presidio and

Fort Mason—and "straight on into the sunset" (HY 287). But the stirring, seething, roaring, bubbling and melding of God's "great Melting Pot" (Zangwill, MP 363, act 4) finds no conduit in Wolf's more tempered novel. Wolf rejects the closure that might have been provided by an ontological model that alleviated the oppositional realities of longed for inclusion by a culture that was historically marked by exclusion. Why did Wolf resist this resolution in Heirs of Yesterday?

Both models of inclusion provided by Kallen's ethnic pluralism and Zangwill's melting pot fail the Jewish protagonists of Heirs of Yesterday. Neither metaphorical solution to the crisis of Jewish identity under the pressure of anti-Semitism remedied the polarity of biculturalism. Affirming Jewish ethnicity within the orchestra of American diversity, Kallen decoded the social enigma posed by a hyphenated identity by linking his terms, Jewish and American in a symbiotic bond. "Kallen solved the dilemma of being Jewish in America by defining both terms, *American* and *Jew*, so that realization of the one became identical with the realization of the other"(Klingenstein 50). For Philip May, ethnic and national identities remain taut, even frayed. Seeking acceptance from the American majority proves fruitless and, as a consequence, Philip's connection to Judaism remains tenuous. Wolf realizes that draping her characters in the American flag will not make them any less Jewish, nor will it assure their acceptance by the Christian majority. As much as Philip insists he is different from other Jews, the (Christian) American majority fails to distinguish between the Jew who accepts his ethnicity and the Jew who denies it. Wolf deciphered the futility of the transaction that ethnic pluralism called for; if

Philip May does not feel at home in America, half of Kallen's dialogic bargain remains inoperative.

The same equation applies to Jean Willard. Though comfortable with her Jewish particularity, Jean is fully cognizant of the "fine distinctions" (HY 275) that forestall her full inclusion in America. Kallen's model of ethnic pluralism lacked the simultaneity of enacting what postmodern theorists recognize as multiple consciousnesses. Kallen's ethnic pluralism invited Jews to be part of a whole, to be different amid multiplicity. Kallen's ethnic pluralism positioned biculturalism in terms of being Jews in America, but his proposition did not see the converse as equally operable. Jews remain subsidiary participants in Kallen's social model. To deploy the orchestral metaphor, Jews were instruments in an American symphony. Their minority status did not change, and Jewish "instrumentality" was perpetually marginalized within the American symphony. Jean Willard feels this marginality when she tries to exercise her American identity. As much as Jean endorses her Jewish religion and race, they are always marginalized, muted solo parts in a larger score. Jews in America sought recognition as Americans, and not as cross-referenced citizens whose national loyalty and military service were diminished by their religious affiliation.

Shortly before Wolf began to write Heirs of Yesterday, the Jewish veterans of the American Civil War were still seeking recognition for their service after a lapse of thirty years. To attain this belated recognition from America for its Jewish servicemen, Simon Wolf (no relation to Emma Wolf) published a list of Jewish Civil War veterans, The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen in 1865 (Dinnerstein, Antisemitism 55).

The indeterminate ending of Heirs of Yesterday suggests that Wolf might also have wondered if some thirty years hence the Jewish veterans of the Spanish-American War would also be petitioning the nation for recognition of their military service as Americans.

For Wolf, the metaphor of the melting pot fell short of the promise that in America all races of the world would "unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God'" (Zangwill, M P 363, act 4). Although The Melting Pot does not advance a reductive heuristic of assimilation, as Edna Nahshon instructively explains in her commentary on the play, Zangwill clarified his intentions in an Afterword that he added in 1914. Zangwill suggested, "The process of American amalgamation is not assimilation or simple surrender to the dominant type, as is popularly supposed, but an all-round give-and-take by which the final type may be enriched or impoverished" (Zangwill, Afterword 379). Zangwill's The Melting Pot projects an inviting multicultural ideal wherein America's diversity captured in its immigrants and ethnicities can potentially intermingle in an ongoing process of fusion. No character incarnates Zangwill's vision more than Philip May, who still laments the collapse of his plan for a socially constructed American identity at the close of Heirs of Yesterday. Philip reflects upon his prior ambitions and admits that "I had a dream of fusion with--my kind" (HY 282). The factor that deflates Philip May's aspirations and debilitates Zangwill's amalgamated metallurgic remedy is that the process of Americanization is marked by rupture. Choosing to be an American resulted to varying degrees in estrangement from the past, from faith, and from previous generations as a new ethnically enriched fusion is

forged in the crucible of America. When Philip May "resolves to break the chain" that ties him to the past, he discovers that the chain of Jewish descent is unbreakable: "*you can never break the chain*" (HY 283). In their encounter with the American melting pot, Jean Willard and Philip May are neither "enriched nor impoverished" (Zangwill, Afterword 379) but remain more or less where they started in the agonistic struggle between "breed and creed" (HY 284).

Wolf recognizes that mediation between ethnicity and nationality is not resolved either through the melting pot or by an insistence upon ethnic peculiarity. It will take nearly a century for a new Jewish American literature to emerge in which Jewishness is not positioned as a choice between opposing paradigms but as a fully enacted identity that operates in an equilibrium with American society. Postmodernist theories of subjectivity have abandoned the nineteenth's century quest for unity, stability and continuity in exchange for an acceptance of bicultural fragmentation, destability, and multiplicity. Had Jean Willard and Philip May lived in twenty-first-century America, they could have been both Jews and Americans without having to determine whether to be Jewish-Americans or American-Jews. The alternative of countless co-existent counter lives was an option that neither ethnic pluralism nor the melting pot provided, but one that Emma Wolf might have preferred because it would be perfectly aligned with the indeterminate and ambiguous ending to Heirs of Yesterday.

Chapter 4: Difference Matters

Emma Wolf was a Jewish literary pioneer, testing antithetical models of femininity, Judaism, and American identity against the conventions and reforms of her age. Wolf's literary legacy combines revolutionary and traditional convictions in a distinguished corpus. In exposing the contradictions inherent in the normative lives of Jewish women in the late nineteenth century, Wolf's novels provide an invaluable historic and literary barometer by which to reflect upon the experiences of Jews on the American frontier. In some of her fiction, Emma Wolf abrogated conventions, especially with regard to intermarriage, divorce, premarital sexual relations and abortion, but in other respects she was an inveterate representative of the received opinions of her time. From the inconsistency of Wolf's stance on controversial issues of her day, we obtain a close approximation of the normality of women's lives. The fluctuations between variant models of womanhood apparently captured Israel Zangwill's attention, perhaps because these gradations in the representation of women had authenticity. In his review of The Joy of Life (1896), Zangwill presciently observed that "the heroine of the book is as artistic a creation as the men—a charming resourceful creature, not a 'new woman,' but certainly not one of the old sort, rather a compromise between the two, with all the best traits of each. . . ." ("New Jewish Novelist"19).

Feminists justly promote those heralded women writers who transgress the inequitable boundaries of their time and become the voices of radical reform. In Wolf's era, many women took bold steps towards progress and change: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Susan B. Anthony, Emma Goldman, Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, and Henrietta

Szold were productive and vocal advocates for women. But to inquire why Emma Wolf did not resemble these political activists is to ask why a dog isn't more like a cat. Wolf's Jewish and gendered activism was restricted to the printed page, where she articulated both her progressive idealism and her conventional romanticism.

Women rarely were unilaterally liberal or completely conservative in every aspect of their lives, and Emma Wolf was no exception. When Wolf either waffled on women's issues or rejected reforms, readers glimpse the gradations in the social and political transformations of the era. Throughout her collective works, Wolf pushed and pulled at the reigning models of femininity. In her Jewish novels, Ruth Levice and Jean Willard are caught between opposing constructs of female agency and neither heroine completely resembles either the True Woman or the New Woman. Wolf adopted traditional attitudes about women's suffrage, motherhood, and romance, but she requires no retroactive absolution for her reluctance to endorse every feminist reform. The fact that Wolf did not actively support the suffragette movement should not be interpreted retrogressively as an ethical or civic lapse to her literary longevity. Wolf was in good company with other Jewish women writers who also promoted antithetical social agendas. Mary Antin was a vocal opponent to restrictions on immigration, yet she had no investment in women's suffrage and openly corrected President Theodore Roosevelt, who mistakenly believed Antin advocated women's suffrage.[1] Even the anarchist Emma Goldman, an early

[1] Evelyn Salz documents in her Introduction to the Selected Letters of Mary Antin (New York: Syracuse UP, 2000) that "Antin's political activism. . . . excluded a concern for the woman suffrage movement that was gaining momentum and feminist support—a curious omission considering her independent spirit. As a woman who retained her maiden name in public and in her writings and who eschewed domesticity in favor of a career in writing and speaking, she, nevertheless, pointedly declared her position to Theodore Roosevelt as being opposed to woman suffrage. Roosevelt's response, 'I shall alter

promoter of birth control, did little to advance women's right to vote. Emma Wolf similarly announces her ambivalence about the New Woman, alternating between her modest endorsement in Other Things Being Equal and her equally modest retraction in The Joy of Life. Mary Antin, Emma Goldman, and Emma Wolf espoused progressive causes and platforms but also upheld traditional attitudes regarding women's rights and roles. To support one enlightened cause does not mandate that a woman should support every progressive platform. Wolf did not wholeheartedly reject the Rest Cure, but she did voice her objections and reservations. In her secular novels, Wolf depicts college-educated, career-orientated women like Gwen Heath in Fulfillment and Barbara Gerish in the Joy of Life (1896) in situations in which these heroines simultaneously advance and retreat from identification with the New Woman. Pulitzer-prize winner and Harvard professor of Early American History, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, argues that "well-behaved women do not make history" and that may be true.[2] Nevertheless, we gain vital insight about Jewish women from Emma Wolf, who wrote well-crafted social narratives about all facets of life, including its mundane, conventional, and conservative details. Precisely because Wolf espoused antithetical views in her fiction, readers apprehend more about the tensions of the times than they might from a radical reformer whose single-minded agenda did not admit controversial refraction. Critical theories promote writers who do not require some reconstruction and refurbishment in meeting the ideological and

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what I said which makes it look as though you are an advocate of suffrage,' undoubtedly followed a stern correction" (xviii).

[2]Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History (New York: Knopf, 2007) began as a study of the pious, well-behaved women celebrated in Puritan funeral sermons but expanded into an examination of women from the fifteenth century through the twentieth century who made history if not by behaving badly, then by defying public opinion.

political exigencies of contemporary life, but there is as much to learn from inconsistency as from consistency.

It seems odd that scholars feel compelled to excuse, justify, or rationalize in the twenty-first century those things that appear to be feminist failings in the nineteenth century. Many overlook the reality that women of the nineteenth century might have been just as conflicted as those of the twenty-first century with regard to issues of particular concern to women: abortion, divorce, marriage, family, career, and child rearing. In retrospect, Wolf advanced as many liberal as conventional beliefs. She favored intermarriage, considered abortion, denounced anti-Semitism. She deliberated upon rather than judged circumstances that led to premarital sex, abortion and divorce. From Wolf's willingness to address these controversial subjects, we acquire a measure of her era. Even the progressive issues on which Wolf waffled or wavered, including women's suffrage, reveal the normality of life in its uneven distribution of attitudes and beliefs that are always in perfect ideological alignment. Readers acquire as much insight from the women who make history as from women, like Emma Wolf, who record its flawed fullness in their fiction. Wolf's narratives sometimes advance women's causes and at other times withdraw from feminist advocacy. In either case, Wolf's thoughtful novels bring balance, realism, and insight to our understanding of Jewish women at the end of the nineteenth century.

As a Jewish woman of the West, Wolf's fiction espoused views that not only contravened the norms of San Francisco Gilded Circle but also countered the acculturative impulse ingrained in American society. Israel Zangwill described Emma

Wolf as "the best product of American Judaism since Emma Lazarus" (Cantalupo, "Letters"129). Despite the hyperbolic praise, Zangwill was not incorrect in recognizing Wolf's courage in celebrating Jewish difference. When Wolf endorsed unconventional positions, as she did in sanctioning intermarriage and advancing Jewish particularity, Wolf reiterates the sentiments of her New-York-born Jewish predecessor, Emma Lazarus, in urging Jews not to forsake their ethnic, religious and cultural inheritance for the nebulous pluralism of American identity. It is plausible that Emma Wolf was cognizant of the writings of her immediate predecessor, Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), when Wolf wrote Heirs of Yesterday. In Emma Lazarus's renowned series of letters, "An Epistle to the Hebrews," she directed Jews in America to become more tribal, to resist assimilative tendencies. Lazarus proposed that conformity to the prevailing norms of an adopted nation implies an acceptance of anti-Jewish stereotypes. Emma Lazarus was not reticent to berate her co-religionists for their lack of pan-Judaic cohesiveness and wrote in "An Epistle to the Hebrews" that "we [Jews] have not sufficient solidarity to perceive that when the life and property of a Jew in the uttermost provinces of the Caucasus are attacked, the dignity of a Jew in free America is humiliated. . . .Until we are all free, none of us are free" (Qtd. in Lichtenstein, Writing 48). Wolf echoes Lazarus' sentiments in calling for Jewish solidarity, a renewed tribalism, and a reaffirmation of Jewish identity rooted in cultural continuity. Heirs of Yesterday resonates with an insistence on the durability of the Jewish difference, affirming "Once a Jew, always a Jew" (HY 95).

At a time when nearly all interest in American Jewish life was focused on Eastern European immigrants on New York's Lower East Side, Emma Wolf's fiction imparts a

singular glimpse of a Western enclave of Jewish life. Wolf's California Jewish contemporaries such as Ray (Rachel) Frank and Gertrude Stein left no lasting depiction of Jewish life in the West. Other Californians, like Harriet Lane Levy, memorialized San Francisco's Jewish community in memoir, but Wolf is one of the very few literary representatives of late nineteenth-century Jewish life in San Francisco.[3]

What is most remarkable about Wolf's Jewish novels is their resistance to prevailing patterns of assimilation espoused by Jewish writers at the end of the century. Instead of abandoning culture and family, Wolf embraces Jewish particularity, adopting the Jewish anthem, "'While the Jew stands, the dream stands'" (HY 94). This assertion of Jewish difference and durability persists inversely to the abandonment of ethnicity among the Jewish immigrant writers. The preservation of Jewish particularity in Wolf's work is a consequence of her American birth, her California origins, and her conviction that Jewish difference is as important as American conformity.

In other ethnic novels of the same period, intermarriage is regarded as a means of inserting oneself into the American mainstream. Mary Dearborn's Pocahontas's Daughters confirms that intermarriage was frequently a "shortcut to Americanization" (101). Dearborn explains that the "Pocahontas legend" that is inscribed in American literature depicts "a white male who is representative of the dominant culture in sexual

[3] Gustav Danziger in "The Jew in San Francisco: The Last Half Century," Overland Monthly (26 April 1885):403, under the subheading "The Jew in Literature and Journalism," selects the following women for approbation. Danziger mentions Emma Wolf as a writer who has "met with some success as a writer." Danziger continues by noting that "Miss Harriet Levy is another clever girl. . . .Miss Miriam Michelson has lately come forth as a writer. Miss Ray Frank, of Oakland, is a tremendously intellectual woman." Most surveys of nineteenth-century Jewish women's writing do not mention other West Coast writers. For instance, in her comprehensive study, Diane Lichtenstein in Writing Their Nations (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1992) 78, aligns Emma Wolf in chronological proximity to Philadelphia essayist, Nina Morais (Cohen) (1855-1918) and New York novelist Annie Nathan Meyer (1867-1951), all of whom share in interest in "female independence."

union with an alien or 'ethnic' woman" (103). The "Pocahontas marriage," Dearborn suggests, is often parlayed into a ". . . symbolic literalization of the American dream, both in terms of success and love, variously it suggests an assertion of the melting-pot idealism, of the forging of a 'new man' of Cinderella success, of love regardless of race, creed, or color' or the promise of America itself" (103). In this scenario, intermarriage plays out as a means of eclipsing "Otherness." Dearborn emphasizes that the "Pocahontas marriage" was particularly appealing to immigrant writers seeking access to America. In contradistinction to the fiction of the Jewish immigrants, notably Mary Antin, Anzia Yezierska, and Abraham Cahan, Wolf's Jewish novels resist the erasure of difference. Wolf boldly asserts in Other Things Being Equal and Heirs of Yesterday that Jewish difference can co-exist with American citizenship; and Jewishness need not be melded, fused or marginalized amid ethnic diversity of American culture.

If Wolf's commitment to Jewish life was as strong as it appears to have been in Other Things Being Equal and Heirs of Yesterday, readers must inquire why she never returned to a Jewish subject. Wolf's subsequent short fiction published in the Smart Set between 1902 and 1911 and her last book, Fulfillment: A California Novel (1916), have unabashedly secular subjects. Accounting for Wolf's abandonment of Jewish subjects remains a highly speculative endeavor. Diane Lichtenstein and Barbara Cantalupo have proposed various answers to explain the disappearance of Jewish concerns in Wolf's later works, but whether her decision was determined by illness or temperament, the fact

remains that Wolf never penned another overtly Jewish book.[4] It is possible that the lapse may not reflect the forsaking of former interests as much as a pragmatic move toward romantic stories that would have a wider appeal for the national audience that read The Smart Set, a magazine that was subtitled "The Magazine of Cleverness."[5] Serious fiction about social or political subjects were inappropriate for the Smart Set whose mission to be "caviar to the general [reader]—and for the *dilettanti* as well. Its columns were to be given principally to 'realistic,' if nonetheless imaginary, tales of leisurely life lived at the top of the American pyramid" (Dolmetsch 5-6). In her Smart Set contributions, Wolf nevertheless engages serious issues, but romance remains at the heart of these stories. As she grew older, though dearly loved by her extensive family, Wolf might have turned to fiction to play out her own unfulfilled dreams of marriage and romance. Following Heirs of Yesterday, which appeared in 1900, Wolf published ten stories between 1902 and 1909 in the Smart Set and composed one last novel, Fulfillment: A California Novel (1916). However, her poetry, which is alluded to in reviews, letters, and her obituary

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[4]In her Introduction to Other Things Being Equal (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2002), Barbara Cantalupo mentions that "because of polio and her unassuming personality, Wolf did not pursue the literary limelight as she might have" (22). Cantalupo also notes that ". . . . throughout her literary career Wolf remained modest, as evidenced by her responses in an interview with Helen Piper in the 3 December 1930 issue of the San Francisco Chronicle: 'A shut-in's adventures can't possibly be exciting. . . .One sits by one's window and watches the parade. There is time to think. There is time to enjoy much that others are too busy to see' " (14).

[5] In 'The Smart Set': A History and Anthology (New York Dial Press, 1966), Carl R. Dolmetsch defined the intent of the magazine's "pet term," cleverness. By cleverness, the publisher did not mean ". . .what was *avante garde* or experimental or even novel or skillful in ideas and style, but, instead, the kind of badinage that echoed in the drawing rooms where the supercilious *bon mot* was as much a status symbol as the diamond stickpin. It [cleverness] was not a literary value but a social one, transferred chiefly to the subject-matter of writing and only tangentially to style. To be 'clever' in 1900 was to be *au courant* and a wee bit cynical. It was not quite the same thing as being 'smart,' or fashionable; in fact it was 'clever' to be affectedly careless of fashion" (6). In its search for clever stories the Smart Set published James Joyce's "The Cloud", Eugene O'Neill's "Ile," Padraic Colum's "The Beggar-Woman Sings," F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Debutante," Ezra Pound's "Pan is Dead," and O. Henry's "A Ghost of a Chance." The Smart Set existed between March 10, 1900, and June 15, 1930.

does not survive and it is possible that Wolf might have returned to Jewish subjects in verse. Again, whether she wrote on Jewish topics in either poetry or prose, remains unanswerable. Finally, Wolf may not have compartmentalized her fiction and did not necessarily make "fine distinctions" (HY 275) between her American and Jewish stories. In this respect, Other Things Being Equal and Heirs of Yesterday are simply parts of a continuing saga of the Jewish writer's encounter with America. Wolf's literary legacy is secured by her advocacy for Jewish women and her replication of nineteenth-century Jewish-American life, a testimony that does not exist elsewhere in American fiction. In depicting the realities of Jewish life from the Far West, Wolf was different from other Jewish writers, and as her Jewish fiction insisted, this difference mattered.

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